Hafa Adai!

Public warned of high surf today, rip currents 'til Friday. **PAGE 6**

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 238

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2 found alive and well

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The two overdue fishermen who were reported missing by family members three days ago were found alive and well and returned home safely yesterday afternoon.

According to a press release from the Department of Public Safety, as of 3pm yesterday, search teams have confirmed that the two fishermen were found west of Saipan and Tinian. Both were reportedly alive and in good health.

Saipan Tribune learned

See ALIVE on Page 4

First lady Diann Torres and Wella Palacios, wife of Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, led the lighting ceremony for the Christmas Village of the Hill last Sunday at the Governor's Office on Capital Hill, signaling the start of the Christmas season in the Marianas.
NEIL FAMA

'Christmas on the Hill' is a go

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

It's officially Christmas season in the CNMI.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, first Lady Diann T. Torres, Santa Claus, and several of the community's children kicked off "Christmas on the Hill" with a countdown for the lighting of the giant Christmas tree last Sunday on Capital Hill.

That signaled the lighting up of several Christmas-themed displays scattered throughout government offices on Capital Hill. About 50 partnerships between government agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations with special holiday themes came together for the socially-distant

See HILL on Page 4

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, center, discusses the allocation of $980,000 to assist CNMI fishermen during a press conference yesterday. Other in photo are, from left to right, Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Antonio Benavente, Saipan Mayor David Apatang, and Division of Fish and Wildlife director Manny Pangelinan.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

$980K aid available to fishermen

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» CW workers likely eligible

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres announced yesterday the allocation of $980,000 in CARES Act funds to assist commercial and subsistence fishermen in the CNMI—estimated to be in the thousands—who've been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Torres said at a press conference that the money is available after the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration approved the CNMI's "spending plan" for the money it got from the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security Act.

Torres said all resident fishermen and qualified fishing

See $980K on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Browne: No sign China will blacklist NMI

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC chief executive officer Donald Browne said yesterday that there is no indication that the CNMI would be on any Chinese Community Party's "blacklist" of cross-border gambling tourism destinations.

Browne

"It would be rather presumptuous on our part to as-

See BROWNE on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Nov. 30, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	6,768	50	6,818
Recovered	5,521	0	5,521
Active	1,135	50	1,185
Deaths	112	0	112
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			84,828

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	105	1	106
Traced via Travel Screening	78	0	78
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			105

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases. The CHCC COVID-19 dashboard will be undergoing maintenance until further notice.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

INSIDE

LOCAL
Chris Nelson and Todd Montgomery host a new television program called "Tech Trek."
PAGE 5

BUSINESS
Find unique pieces of jewelry at Sophia Althea, which will have a grand opening today.
PAGE 11

NATION
Dr. Anthony Fauci warns the U.S. may see "surge upon a surge" of the coronavirus ahead.
PAGE 12

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

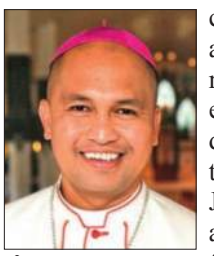
GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

No Niño this year due to COVID-19

CONGRESSMAN
GREGORIO KILILI
CAMACHO SABLAN
Serving the People of the Northern Mariana Islands
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR
MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMY
CONGRESSIONAL NOMINATIONS
Opportunities to learn and serve at the U.S. Service Academy include a fully funded education and a commission as a military officer upon graduation.
Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan may nominate constituents to the
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
U.S. Air Force Academy
U.S. Military Academy
U.S. Naval Academy
Eligibility: U.S. citizen, unmarried with no dependents, age 17-23, high school senior or graduate, strong academic record, and ability to pass a physical fitness test.
To access the nomination application or for more information, visit sablan.house.gov or call 670-323-2647/8 on Saipan, 433-2647 on Tinian, or 532-2647 on Rota.
This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER


Jimenez

The Catholic Church's tradition of bringing the statue of the Child Christ into homes during the holidays will not take place this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa informed the public last Nov. 28 that the traditional practice of bringing the image of Baby Jesus, locally called Niño, into homes will be canceled due to COVID-19, with churches around the islands practicing safety measures.

"I personally regret that our practice of bringing the images of the Child Jesus to homes this year cannot be undertaken for the sake of safety, but I urge all to be flexible and full of faith," he said on the diocese's website.

Every year for Christmas, New Year's Day, the Feast of the Holy Family, and Three Kings, Catholics have a tradition of waiting to welcome the Niño into their homes after attending church, to signify welcoming the blessings and graces of the Prince of Peace.

The Niño usually visits either on Christmas Day, the Feast of the Holy Family (the Sunday after Christmas), Three Kings (Jan. 6), or New Year's Day.

People usually also make an offering for the Church at the time of the Niño visitation. This year, without the visit, "I humbly suggest you make your offering when you visit Niño during the Sundays of Advent and Christmas," said Jimenez.

Jimenez is thankful that churches have been able to reopen, but with restrictions. Churchgoers have also been obedient in following all the protocols in church. Jimenez is grateful to all who have "carefully, lovingly, and expertly" helped all of us to comply with the requirements set down for the churches. This includes the pastors, workers, and all faithful people who deserve thanks.

"That relieves me quite a lot because, as your servant-leader, your bishop, I would not have to become a kind of enforcer for the government safety plans or a voice which gets rejected," said Jimenez.

Jimenez said that these are "extraordinary times" of human suffering and concern, that everyone is dealing with the effects of the pandemic in different ways. "We are aware that the economy has fallen here, especially since so much of it depends on tourism. Some of us, thankfully, have become more sensitive to the suffering around us," he said, "[helping] to raise our social sensitivity about the value of life beyond ourselves and our families to include a wider community."

"May all of us stay sensitive to our personal and community suffering this Advent, but receive and celebrate the blessings of virtuous holiness in our midst, staying flexible and with our hearts fixed on God's will and uncompromised love for us," said Jimenez.

Flooding possible in low-lying areas

The National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, is predicting that locally heavy rainfall is possible late Wednesday and Thursday,

As per NWS information compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, a broad surface trough is expected to develop near Yap and Palau on Wednesday that curves east-northeastward to the Marianas. A trade wind disturbance, currently well east of the Marianas near 168E, will impinge on this trough. Global models suggest a weak circulation may manifest itself just south or southwest of Guam early Thursday. The end result is enhanced low-level convergence and plenty of moisture to squeeze out showers. This scenario may lead to heavy showers at times and showers that train over a certain area. Rainfall amounts of 2 to 4 inches are possible during this time, though local amounts could be substantially higher.

Localized flooding will be possible in low-lying and poor drainage areas while flash flooding will be possible in areas of the heaviest rainfall, especially near steep terrain. Already saturated soils will add to the flooding potential. This developing situation will continue to be monitored closely and a flash flood watch may be issued, if conditions warrant.

The public is being advised that localized flooding will be possible in low-lying and poor drainage areas. Check storm drains in your area to make sure they are not clogged. If planning anything outdoors this week, have a backup plan in place. ***(PR)***

THE ART OF THE SKATE

Aaron Lavapie and a group of other skaters show off their moves at the Garapan Skate Park next to the Gold's Gym in Garapan. The group has been shredding the graffiti-decorated skatepark for more than five years now. Lavapie, who goes to the Northern Marianas College, said that he and his friends spend their free time at the park almost every day of the week. The Garapan Skate Park was completed back in 2009 and is open to all skateboarding enthusiasts.

NEIL FAMA

CNMI DOL receives $27.5M for FPUC program

The CNMI Department of Labor announced yesterday that it received an additional $27,574,600 for the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program.

CNMI DOL learned on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26, 2020, that it met federal reporting requirements for obtaining the additional $27.5 million in FPUC funding.

"This has been the culmination of a monthlong effort between our department and the [U.S. Department of Labor], so this is [welcome] news for the CNMI," said Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente. "As of Nov. 12, 2020, a total of 36,602 [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance] and FPUC claims were processed through the hiremarianas.com portal. Of these, 17,931 claims were confirmed as fraudulent and ineligible applicants. The claims data, which was reported by CNMI DOL to the U.S. Department of Labor, indicated that unemployment fraud had greatly affected the timeliness of processing legitimate PUA claims in the CNMI."

Current estimates from the CNMI Department of Finance confirms that the additional $27.5 million FPUC funds will cover benefits payments for the month of September through November 2020.

"The eligible PUA claimants will be receiving FPUC benefits, either by direct deposit or paper check, within the next few weeks. Claimants who opted for paper checks will be contacted by DOL to confirm their mailing address and to confirm if they wish to pick up their check instead of DOL mailing the check. The PUA claimants will be given a pickup date and time by the DOL staff. We ask that claimants do not visit the DOL offices, unless they are contacted by DOL staff. It's imperative that we continue to follow the safety and health protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the CNMI," added Benavente. ***(PR)***

Woman in 'ice' case pleads guilty

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

A woman who allegedly conspired with others to distribute methamphetamine or "ice" in the CNMI has pleaded guilty to the charges against her.

Mary Rose Chelo Herradura pleaded guilty last week before U.S District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona.

Herradura pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to possess methamphetamine with the intent to distribute. She will be sentenced on April 2, 2021.

Because Herradura pleaded guilty to a class C felony, the maximum penalty is more than 20 years' imprisonment, a fine of up to $1 million, restitution, and a $100 special penalty assessment. Aside from court-imposed penalties, Herradura also faces possible deportation.

According to factual basis of the case, between Sept. 20 and 29, Herradura's allowed her co-defendant, Jesse Reyes Babauta, to have envelopes containing methamphetamine mailed to her private postal box in Garapan. Herradura would retrieve the envelopes and deliver them to Babauta knowing that he would later distribute them to other people.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Herradura tested positive for methamphetamine multiple times while out on probation and admitted to using "ice" because she was nervous for a court hearing.

On Oct. 20, probation officer Juanette David-Atalig submitted Herradura's treatment referral documents to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Community Guidance Center.

Herradura reported back to the probation office on Nov. 9 to sign related documents but the defendant was observed to be slurring her speech and had odd mannerisms. However, when asked about drug use, Herradura at first denied it but later admitted using methamphetamine on the evening of Nov. 6.

Herradura explained that a friend had stopped by her apartment to visit and began to smoke the drug in front of her. She said she asked her friend to stop what she was doing, but she ignored her. The defendant eventually gave in and ended up smoking with this individual.

On Nov. 11, Herradura notified the probation office that the sweat patch she had on for monitoring purposes had fallen off because she was sweating after catching a fever, but a probation officer told her that her explanation was highly unlikely. She was then subjected to a drug test, which tested positive for methamphetamine. Herradura then admitted that she used meth on Nov. 9 and said that she removed the sweat patch from her arm.

On Nov. 17, Herradura tested positive for meth use again after a random test.

BUNDLE &
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Torres hopes IPI will finish its project

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres hopes that Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC will continue and finish its Imperial Pacific Resort in Garapan and other projects as well as address other issues that the company is facing.

At a radio news briefing last week, Torres said the casino industry is critical to the CNMI and that he is happy that the Department of Public Works lifted its stop-work order for IPI to continue with its construction.

"Because we know how important the [role they] play in our economy, our retirees," the governor said.

Torres said he is not happy and very disappointed with IPI's actions and inactions but, at the same time, he also acknowledged what IPI has brought to the CNMI's economy.

"And I hope that we can move forward on it and they can finish their project," he said.

Despite DPW lifting last Wednesday its stop-work order against IPI at the ongoing construction of its casino/hotel project in Garapan, work hasn't resumed yet because of another dispute with IPI's safety consultant.

Last Wednesday, DPW Building Safety Code Division representative/inspector Gani Salazar, told the Commonwealth Casino Commission that it has allowed IPI to resume construction work at tower hotel's levels 3 to 13 of the Imperial Pacific Resort building after IPI complied with DPW's requirements.

Salazar, however, stated that IPI cannot work on tower hotel's Level 14 unless they submit shop drawings and revised plan for that floor.

IPI received the stop-work order from DPW last Oct. 27.

In the stop-work order, DPW suspended all construction work from tower hotel's Level 3 to Sky Level 14 until shop drawings and revised plans are submitted to and approved by DPW's building safety officer.

DPW also suspended all welding work.

$980K

From Page 1

businesses who sustained losses are eligible.

Qualifying businesses refer to commercial fishing businesses, charter-for-hire fishing businesses, qualified aquaculture businesses, fish processors, and dealers.

All eligible applicants will receive assistance based on an approved formula that will determine the amounts of help for businesses and individual fishermen.

Application distribution will begin tomorrow, Wednesday, and the deadline to submit applications is March 1, 2021.

The distribution of assistance checks will be made directly via mail from the NOAA Hawaii Office to approved businesses and fishermen between May 3 and June 16, 2021.

On Saipan, the applications will be available at the Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Office of Grants Management, and the Saipan Mayor's Office. On Tinian and Rota, their respective mayor's offices will distribute the applications.

Division of Fish and Wildlife director Manny Pangelinan said they have gone through a lengthy meeting with NOAA, which answered all their questions as to who are eligible or not. He said the CNMI's CARES Act "spending plan" that NOAA approved addresses all those criteria.

Pangelinan said they have already developed a timeline so that everybody will know every phase of the program.

It's not the CNMI government that is going to release the money; it's the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, he said. "We do all the job here. We review all the applications, we send it up to the commission. The commission will send out to individuals the check to receive the money," he said.

He said they give 90 days for the application process in order for people and businesses to have adequate time to submit their applications.

He said they are going to inform those who are found ineligible and there is a seven-day appeal process for them.

"So all of these need to be addressed before we send everything to the commission," he said.

Pangelinan said the bulk of the work has already been done as the hard part was developing the "spending plan." He said the calculation that they use in the CNMI is similar to the one adopted by other U.S. jurisdictions. "That calculation will work where everybody gets a piece of a pie. We check that calculation, we double check it, we triple check it, that everybody will receive money," the director said.

Pangelinan said it is not across the board, but depends on someone's loss. "We categorize it by commercial, aquaculture, and so forth. So if you submit a loss of $10,000 and this one submits a loss of $5,000, it will not be the same. The formula is the same," Pangelinan said.

Torres underscored the importance for the community to understand that they are vetted.

Torres said he is sure there will be some questions along the way, but that it's very important that there is a process.

DLNR Secretary Antonio T. Benavente said they don't want to make it hard on fishermen. "We want to try and assist them and the quickest means of recouping their loss is the application," Benavente said.

Benavente said the distribution process is there so it's now up to the fishermen and commercial businesses apply and fill up the application as soon as possible.

Epi Cabrera, administrator for the Office of Grants Management, said the commission is the one releasing the checks. Cabrera said the CNMI government opted to have the commission distribute the checks so that the federal arm will be the ones mailing it.

When Cabrera asked Pangelinan to clarify whether CW workers are eligible to apply, Pangelinan said the law is not clear as it only says it's up to the state to determine whether CW workers are allowed or not. "What we are getting now is either you are a green card-holder or a U.S. citizen," Pangelinan said.

Torres told Pangelinan to take the lead on this. "And all I want is to make sure that we give as much as we can to our fishermen and make sure that we give this assistance, and follow the program and the formula that you guys have worked so hard," Torres said.

Torres asked those eligible to take advantage of this program. "Be straight and honest on the application so that we can assist everyone that falls into the right category," Torres said.

When asked to clarify whether CW workers are eligible to apply, Torres said they are going to go back and discussed it thoroughly. Torres said they are going to see what that formula is, but hinted that they want to be make this as flexible as they can.

Press secretary Kevin Bautista said the CNMI government, through Torres, made a request to NOAA and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to expand eligibility for all fishermen that fall into the categories of commercial and subsistence fishermen.

Bautista said Torres specifically made a request to include the eligibility of CW workers and everyone, regardless of immigration status, who are fishermen and fall into those eligible categories.

"The CNMI government has the discretion to distribute the funds. It looks like we'll be able to provide those benefits to fishermen regardless of their immigration status, as long as they fit the categories prescribed under the CARES Act program," Bautista said.

ALIVE

From Page 1

from a source that the fishermen's vessel had run out of fuel and they were stranded a little farther than where they had planned to fish.

Saipan Tribune reached out to DPS for additional information but there was still no further information as of 6pm press time.

DPS encourages boaters to notify friends and family members about fishing routes or which area they plan to go fishing, as well as their expected time of arrival. For fishermen who are having trouble out in the water, call into Channel 16 on the vessel's VHF radio for help. Community members are also encouraged to report distressed vessels.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, DPS received a call at about 9am last Friday about two overdue fisherman who left the Garapan Fishing Base marina at about 5:30am on Thursday morning. The men were due to return on Friday morning.

Police learned from the callers, the fishermen's spouses, that their husbands might be fishing around Goat Island and Tinian. The two fishermen left aboard a white, 21-foot, fiberglass boat named *Sea Swirl*, which is powered by a 150-horsepower, 4-stroke Yamaha engine.

The DPS *Zodiac I* rescue boat was launched at about 9:30am to search around the west side of Saipan as the DPS *Impact* rescue boat searched for the missing vessel at Marpi Reef, Goat Island, and Tinian. The U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy assisted the Coast Guard cutter *Oliver Henry* and the U.S. Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 throughout the day.

During the search, the *Impact* rescue boat made contact with vessels that were fishing around the Esmeralda Reef and Coke Reef but the people aboard those boats stated that there were no other vessels out there. The *Impact* continued toward the west side of Tinian with no sighting of the vessel.

The search for the fishermen continued for three days, with the search ending on Day 3 with the men returned home safely.

BROWNE

From Page 1

sume this," Browne said.

He said there are many expert opinions on which destinations may be targeted for blacklisting and the justifications for doing so but the CNMI does not have any of the components of a red flag.

"Yes, we have gambling but, at this point, it's a small industry comparatively, and Chinese tourists are relatively minuscule compared to the destinations that may be targeted," Browne said.

He pointed out that only 186,000 mainland Chinese came to the CNMI in 2019. Comparatively, 6 million mainland Chinese went to South Korea in 2019; 5.81 million went to Vietnam; 3.4 million went to Singapore; 2.6 million went to Cambodia; 1.74 million went to the Philippines, and 1.44 million went to Australia.

Browne earlier stated that IPI has nothing to do with it in response to a report that the Chinese Communist Party is looking at "blacklisting" cross-border gambling tourism destinations.

CCC chair Edward C. Deleon Guerrero stated during CCC board's meeting last week that he wants to discuss the matter with IPI, as he believes this will have a very serious implications on not only casino gambling in the CNMI but tourism in general.

It was reported last August that China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced that the ministry and other departments will jointly launch a blacklist of overseas travel destinations.

Chinese gamblers spend an estimated $145 billion a year on illegal gambling sites, mostly in the Philippines, according to *The South China Morning Post.*

HILL

From Page 1

Christmas village.

According to the first lady Diann Torres, community members will be able to enjoy these displays every day this Christmas season, from 6pm until the morning.

"Your presence tonight brings me happiness, brings me joy, and normalcy this season. It is always the wish of the governor, the lieutenant governor [Arnold I. Palacios], [Palacios' wife] Wella Palacios, and myself to bring joy, happiness, and good tidings to each one of you [and] your families near and far," said first lady Diann Torres.

Despite the many challenges of 2020 and all the protocols that everyone must adhere to protect from the COVID-19 virus, first lady Diann Torres thanked the CNMI community for making the CNMI one of the "safest places on U.S. soil."

"Today, we try to live with new normalcy—mask, social distancing—but we must continue to do that, to ensure that we are healthy, we are strong but, most importantly, we are alive. …We are alive, and we are here in celebration of the coming of Jesus Christ," she said. She thanked their many partners that made the event a success, adding that they could not have had a more successful event without them.

"We ask that you continue to reach out, continue to spread the love, and be positive, as we all are going through a rough time," said the first lady.

Christmas in the Marianas used to be celebrated with a Christmas Village and the giant Christmas tree at the grounds of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. This is the first time it is being done on Capital Hill.

Shirley Ogumoro, who is the special assistant for the Woman's Affairs Office, explained that the goal of Christmas on the Hill is to make it a "magical Christmas" this year with a drive-thru display despite the COVID-19 restrictions.

Participants in the event include Bridge Capital, Commonwealth Cancer Association, Commonwealth Women's Association, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, Herman's Bakery, Isa Villa, IT&E, Kautz Glass, Kensington Saipan Hotel, Lady Diann Torres Foundation, Miss Northern Marianas Earth, NMI Girl Scouts, Pacifica Insurance, TanHoldings, and YCO.

The buildings that were lit on Capital Hill are the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Finance, Department of Commerce, the CNMI Substance Abuse Addictions & Rehabilitation Program, the CNMI Board of Parole, the Department of Labor, the CNMI Women's Affairs Office partnered with Herman's Modern Bakery, the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs, the CNMI Indigenous Affairs Office and the Department of Public Lands, the CNMI Office of Planning and Development, the Northern Islands Mayor's Office and the Carolinian Affairs Office, CNMI Scholarship Office, the Marianas Visitors Authority, the Office of Veterans Affairs, and more.

'Tech Trek' to air on OPB and Amazon Prime

Chris Nelson and Todd Montgomery host a new television program that explores the intersection of travel and technology in the hospitality industry. The pilot was shot and edited by Ben Atalig.

The debut episode has Nelson and Montgomery exploring Japan. It airs at 7:30pm on Dec. 1 on Oregon Public Broadcasting and will be streamed beginning mid-December on Amazon Prime Video. It will also air on Channel 4 in Hawaii and on Channel 2 on Saipan later this month.

In the first episode, the pair explores automation technology being introduced to the hospitality industry in Tokyo. They also look at the impact of automation on the workforce.

"The Japan episode is a combination of fact, future, and fun. We wrapped shooting in Tokyo, just prior to the pandemic and the country shutting down, so our first episode looks at where things were and where they could be going when travel resumes," said Nelson.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chris Nelson, right, and Todd Montgomery explore Japan in a new television program called "Tech Trek," which explores the intersection of travel and technology in the hospitality industry.

"Automation is already having a big effect on the travel industry, and it looks like it will be accelerated by the current pandemic. We do interesting things like visit a robot restaurant, check into a hotel staffed by robots, and look for the world's best toilet," said Montgomery.

The show was written by Nelson who has produced travel segments that include climbing to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, mountain biking on The Inca Trail in Peru, hiking the Milford Track in New Zealand, snorkeling between continents in Iceland, and building artificial reefs in Indonesia.

"Travel is always more interesting with a purpose. We've never been too interested in sightseeing. We like to dig into the doing part. We loved traveling and shooting in Japan, and it was great to shoot with Ben and Todd. I think viewers will be entertained and learn something too. We are excited that the show has been picked up by Oregon Public Broadcasting, and KITV in Honolulu," said Nelson.

Montgomery now lives in Bend, Oregon. He spent many of his formative years on Saipan. He met his wife at the Pacific Islands Club tennis courts, and co-hosted a TV show with Nelson called Eye on the CNMI. The pair decided to reunite forces for this new travel show with more episodes to come.

The show is shot primarily in Shibuya, Shinjuku, Niigata, Chiba, and Odaiba and includes exploration as well as a casual interview style shared by Nelson and Montgomery.

"Consumers are going to one day see these incredible technologies when they begin to travel again, and automation is going to have a big impact not just to save on labor costs, but now for public health reasons as well," said Montgomery.

Future episodes of "Tech Trek" will continue to focus on travel, the future of work in the travel sector, and what a post-COVID-19 recovery may look like around the globe. ***(PR)***

ON THE NET

Episode 1 Preview: https://media.oregonstate.edu/media/t/1_xmeiwb21

NORTHERN MARIANAS TRADES INSTITUTE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 2, 2020 9:30AM
AGENDA

I. Meeting Called to Order (Establishment of a quorum)
II. Adoption of Agenda
III. Adoption of Minutes of October 17, 2019 .....A
IV. Public Comments
V. Reports / Info
  A. Chairman
  B. CEO .....B
    1) Senator Quitugua's Interpretation of P.L. 20-92 Committee on Transition & Board of Director's Function.....B.1
    2) A.G.'s opinion on P.L. 20-92 re Board of Director's power during Transition B.2
    3) CWF Report for FY 2020 .....B.3
    4) Da'ok Academy's Status at NMTI
VI. Executive Session

VII. New Business.....C
  A. NMTI Re-Opening Plan in Phases C.1
  B. FY 2020 carry-over funding C.2
  C. Alternative Funding Source(s) & S.B. 21-3 2.....C3
  D. Committee on Transition's Report.

VIII. Next Board Regular Meeting: Date & Time

VIII. Adjournment

Northern Marianas Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
Chamorro-English, Carolinian-English Translation Services

Interested parties can access more details for this RFP at www.nmhcouncil.org.

Submission Deadline: December 14, 2020

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP21-CHCC/THC-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 2, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"TINIAN HEALTH CENTER STORM READINESS PROJECT"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW21-ITB-005

SUBMISSION DATE: December 18, 2020 TIME: 9:30 A.M

"Island Wide Emergency Repair, Traffic Signs and Pavement Markings Project No.EY-19, (002) Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 4, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 11, 2020** to **Ms. Lorraine M. Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW21-ITB-006

SUBMISSION DATE: December 18, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M

"Island Wide Emergency Repair, Miscellaneous Items Project No. EY-19, (003) Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 4, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 11, 2020** to **Ms. Lorraine M. Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW21-ITB-007

SUBMISSION DATE: December 18, 2020 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"Miscellaneous Emergency Repair, Traffic Signs and Roadway Pavement Project No. EY-19, (005) Tinian"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 4, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Mayor Office, Tinian. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 11, 2020** to **Ms. Lorraine M. Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Public warned of high surf today, rip currents 'til Friday

A high surf advisory remains in effect through tonight, while a high rip current risk is in effect through Friday. Also, a small craft advisory remains in effect through today, Tuesday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, hazardous surf of 9 to 12 feet and dangerous rip currents will be present along east facing reefs of Saipan and Tinian.

The high surf advisory is likely to persist through at least tonight, Tuesday. The high rip current risk will linger through Friday.

This will create dangerous conditions for swimmers and beach goers. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. The public is being advised to avoid venturing out toward east facing reefs. Inexperienced ocean goers should remain out of the water due to strong rip currents. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don`t swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

On Rota, information received from the NWS show that there is a high risk for rip currents that will continue through Friday. An increase in east swell is expected to produce hazardous surf along east facing reefs through at least Tuesday night.

Also, combined seas of 8 to 10 feet with winds gusting to 25 knots will be seen along coastal waters of Tinian and Saipan through 6pm today, with the highest seas across eastern waters. Marine conditions will be hazardous for small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in hazardous conditions. ***(PR)***

TOYS FOR TOTS SPONSOR

BankPacific recently signed on as an official 2020 "Toys for Tots" sponsor this holiday season. The "Toys for Tots" program is a charitable initiative hosted by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve that provides toys to disadvantaged children during the Christmas holiday season. The program is spearheaded by the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Saipan Young Professionals. Businesses who would like to participate in this program and host a toy collection box can email saipantoys4tots@gmail.com.

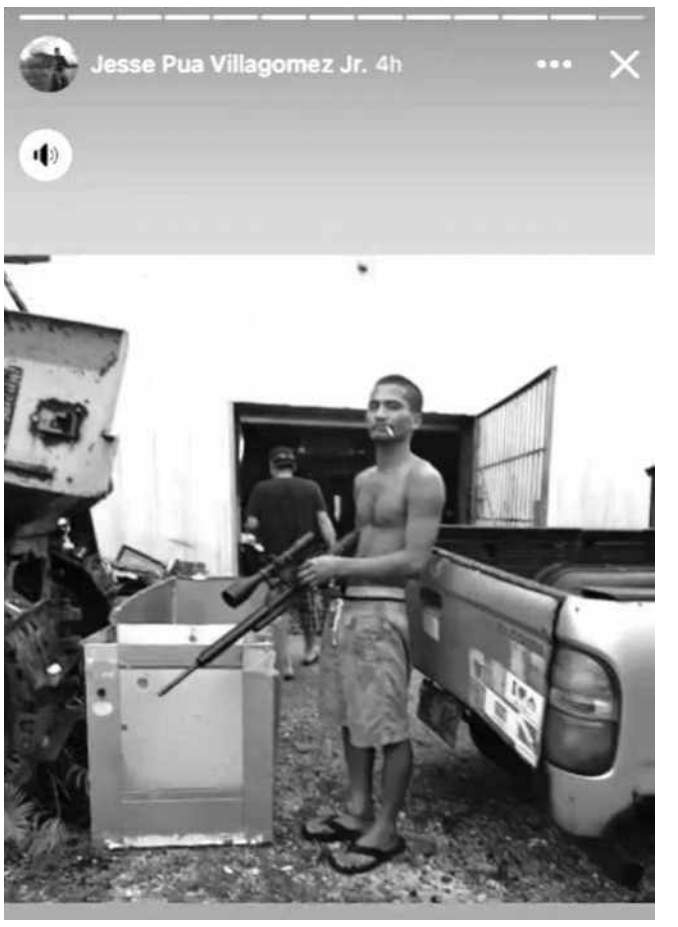
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

EXCELLENT SHOWING

Grace Christian Academy competitors who took part in the second virtual monthly qualifying Primary Grades Forensic Conference in November have their picture taken. All 16 new and old competitors from GCA won in most of their events. The eight first placers are from GCA.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GAIN offers $2,000 rewards after a dog shooting is shown on video



This frame grab from a video that began circulating on social media on Sunday, Nov. 29, shows a shirtless man shooting a dog from a distance. The dog yelps in pain and is last seen running out of frame of the video.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam Animals In Need is seeking information on the shooting of a dog in Harmon that is seen in a disturbing video shared on social media. Thanks to the support of an anonymous donor, the non-profit is offering a reward of $1,000 for information leading to an arrest and conviction in the case, and an additional $1,000 for the recovery of the dog.

In the video, which began circulating on Sunday, Nov. 29, a shirtless man is pictured holding a firearm with a scope outside an industrial building. He and the cameraman appear to be searching for something to shoot. The cameraman spots a non-aggressive dog, and films as the shirtless man aims and shoots the dog from a distance. The dog yelps in pain and is last seen running out of frame of the video. The cameraman excitedly yells "That's a hit!" It is unknown whether the dog survived the attack.

"I hope the community will help us identify these people. They are cruel and dangerous. This poor dog was threatening no one. We will charge them with felony animal abuse, and I am confident that our excellent attorney general will prosecute with real fervor," said Dr. Thomas Pool, Guam Territorial Veterinarian.

GAIN has forwarded information to the Guam Police Department identifying the location of the video as being Siket Street in Harmon. The non-profit animal welfare organization is asking the public for help in identifying the individuals in the video, and whether they are associated with any business in the vicinity.

The status of the dog in the video is unknown. GAIN is offering a $1,000 reward for the recovery of the dog. "We hope to find the dog alive. People are offering to help in its recovery. But if the dog has died, we would like to conduct an autopsy," said GAIN board president Cyrus Luhr. "The casualness of the violence in the video is disturbing. Why is it okay to hurt or kill a dog for fun? Have they done this before? With the public's help, we hope GPD can make an arrest soon." ***(PR)***

$16.7M education grant aid to FSM, Marshalls

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has awarded $16.7 million in fiscal year 2020 Supplement Education Grant assistance to the governments of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The SEG assistance as provided for under the implementing legislation of the Compact of Free Association through the U.S. Department of Education supports the education sectors in both countries and was awarded for use during fiscal year 2021.

"The Interior and Education teams worked closely together to ensure that this assistance was awarded in a timely manner," said DOI assistant secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech. "These funds provide important support to teachers and students from pre-Kindergarten through post-secondary levels in both the FSM and in the RMI and are an example of the [Trump administration's] continued support to the freely associated states."

More information about SEG assistance may be found in the U.S. Department of Education budget which is available on their website.

Under U.S. Public Law 108-188, the eligibility for the FSM and the RMI to access SEG assistance expires after fiscal year 2023. Bilateral discussions are underway related to certain expiring provisions of the Compacts of Free Association between the United States and each of the freely associated states.

For more information about the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs, visit the website at www.doi.gov/oia, follow on Twitter at @ASIIADomenech, or like us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/Insular-Affairs. ***(DOI)***

Most complete digital atlas of FSM now available for free

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Digital Atlas of Micronesia is a newly launched resource featuring a broad range of geospatial information on the islands of Yap, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Kosrae. It is open to the public to use at islandatlas.org.

With the culmination of a five-year effort to gather a breadth of geospatial data and display it on an interactive digital atlas, the four main islands of the Federated States of Micronesia are now more easily researched than any other island in the Pacific, including Hawaii, Guam, and Fiji.

The Digital Atlas of Micronesia launched on Nov. 1 and is a free and available resource for anyone to use at https://islandatlas.org. It currently covers Yap proper, Chuuk Lagoon, Pohnpei, and Kosrae.

The atlas is a collaborative project among Island Research & Education Initiative, or iREi, a nonprofit organization located in Pohnpei; the FSM Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management; and the Water and Environmental Research Institute at the University of Guam and was funded by the U.S. Geological Survey and the FSM national government.

"We have gone way above and beyond the initial vision, and we now have, by far, the most comprehensive and versatile 'national' geospatial data repository anywhere in the Pacific Islands," said Danko Taboroši, chief editor of the atlas and director of Island Research & Education Initiative. "iREi and WERI created our first digital atlas for Guam in 2009. What we did for the FSM benefited from that experience and loads of new data and improved technologies over the past 10 years."

Fishermen wanting to know the boundaries of marine preserves, tourists interested in seeing historical and cultural sites, a contractor needing to bury new utility lines, a student needing demographics for a particular set of villages for a project, a diver looking for shipwreck sites, or a biologist wanting to find areas with specific vegetation—it's all searchable on the digital atlas. Users can customize a map for their purposes and then export or print it.

The Digital Atlas of Micronesia is a free and available resource for anyone to use at https://islandatlas.org. It currently covers Yap proper, Chuuk Lagoon, Pohnpei, and Kosrae.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
John W. Jenson, director of the Water and Environmental Research Institute at the University of Guam, in 2017. The institute secured funding and provided oversight for the Digital Atlas of Micronesia project.

"There's a lot of information contained in this atlas that—if you just have it in text or table form, it's really hard to comprehend, but if you look at these maps and graphics, they really tell a story," said Maria Kottermair, a UOG WERI alumna and geographic information specialist who is co-editor of the atlas. "We discovered and digitized old, hard-to-find maps, information from the population census. …We even located and digitized maps from a number of historical documents and master's and Ph.D. theses and produced a range of layers representing cultural and historical heritage of the FSM."

The digital atlas features nearly 500 pre-designed static maps, which can be found in the "Gallery," as well as interactive maps for each island with 400 layers that can be toggled on and off. The optional map layers include:

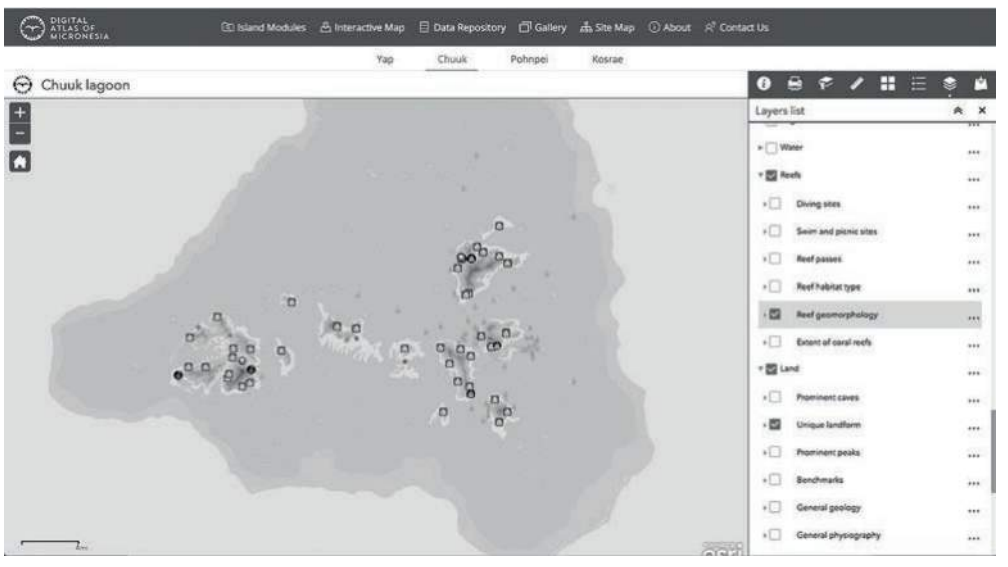
- cultural sites
- conservation areas
- infrastructure, including quarries, wells and water lines, and building footprints
- population demographics
- vegetation cover
- rainfall and waterflow
- reef information
- land characteristics, including elevation, slope degree, soil types, and geology.

"To document this much vetted information in one place—especially for a remote area like Micronesia—is a major feat," said John W. Jenson, director of the Water and Environmental Research Institute at the University of Guam, which helped secure the core funding and provided oversight of the project. "This atlas is an efficient and accessible source of scientifically informed data, and that's the kind of project WERI is always proud to support."

The atlas can be used for a variety of purposes, including sustainable development, effective management of natural resources and infrastructure, emergency response, research, as an education and teaching tool, for general public awareness, and for business as well. It is designed to be user-friendly and intuitive.

"It's a living project, and we intend to keep updating it as new data become available," Kottermair said. "I encourage everyone to just go to the atlas and explore."

The team will work next on including the outer islands of the FSM in the atlas and to rebuild Guam's digital atlas at hydroguam.net, which Kottermair said has been a popular resource but has become outdated. ***(UOG)***



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The interactive map allows users to select an island, customize the map with various layers, including cultural sites, infrastructure, vegetation cover, and marine preserves, and zoom in to areas of interest.

ISLAND RESEARCH & EDUCATION INITIATIVE
Geographic information specialist Maria Kottermair, left, and Danko Taboroši, director of Island Research & Education Initiative based in Pohnpei, served as co-editors of the Digital Atlas of Micronesia, a public website and resource launched on Nov. 1.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Pooled COVID-19 testing could help reopen schools safely

Vaccine or no, testing and tracing COVID-19 infections will be crucial to returning America fully to work and school. It's a key area where the Trump administration has let the country down, and something that President-elect Joe Biden has vowed to fix with a major surge of new testing capacity.

But even many countries that have committed to an aggressive testing regime are finding it extremely expensive and time-consuming. In response, some have relied on a method that isn't much talked about in the United States, though it's well understood: Pooling the lab samples of several people at once. With new evidence showing its effectiveness—as well as potential weaknesses if it isn't done correctly—pooling is something the Biden administration should seriously explore, especially as a way of reopening schools once the current surge subsides.

Pooling samples is exactly what it sounds like. Sometimes it involves using the samples from nasal and throat swabs, or in its simpler form, collecting saliva in cups and mixing it, usually from five people at a time, sometimes more. If the test comes up negative, all the people are considered clear of infection. If not, everyone in the group is retested individually. It can dramatically cut down the number of tests that need to be performed, which means far less cost and less straining of capacity.

Some private schools, such as Duke University, have been using it in the United States and have stayed open without outbreaks. On a much larger scale, China used it to test almost the entire population of Wuhan, where the virus was first identified in December. That's 11 million people.

Yet pooled testing has been rare in the United States. In part, that's for good reason: The testing is effective only when infection rates are low—because that means less chance of needing to retest each person in a group—and for the most part, we're falling short.

The tests can be highly accurate, but that depends on how the testing is done and how many people are in each pool. Overloading the pools would yield too many false negative results, because multiple clean samples in the pool can dilute an infected one below the test's ability to detect the virus.

Still, this is an especially promising avenue for schools, where infection rates appear to have stayed on the low side, compared with the general population. By bringing down costs, students could be tested more often, making everyone feel safer about reopening campuses. We're still hoping not to lose the entire academic year.

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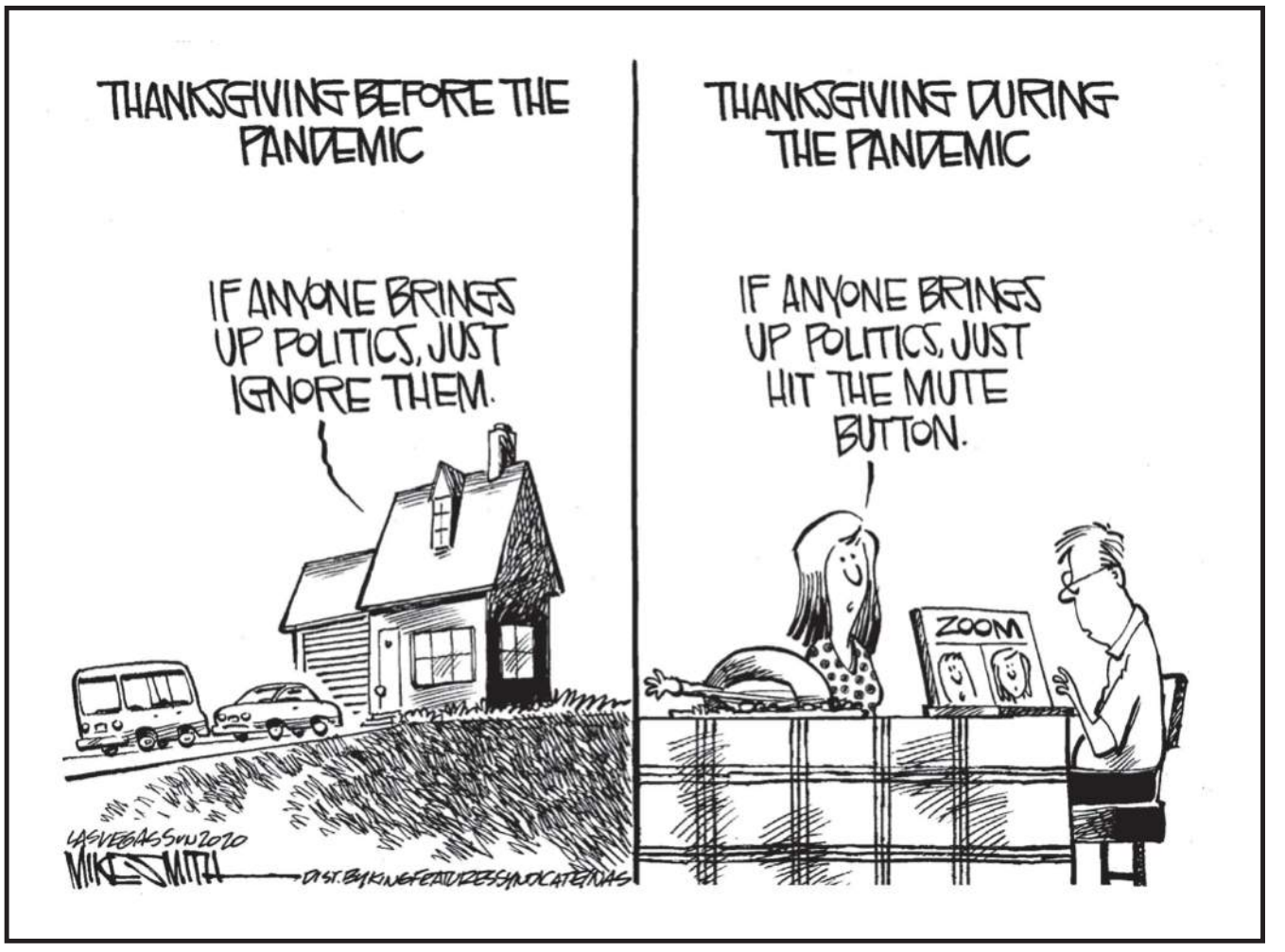
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Congress must pass comprehensive COVID-19 relief bill

By BEN CARDIN
The Baltimore Sun

Ben Cardin (cardin.senate.gov/contact), a Democrat, has represented Maryland in the U.S. Senate since 2007. He is the ranking member of the Senate Small Business Committee.

The rate of daily new COVID-19 cases is now more than 150,000 new cases per day—five times the 30,000 new cases per day reported in the spring and more than twice the 60,000 per day reported in the summer. Unlike those times, when outbreaks were largely regional, we are now experiencing nationwide outbreaks at a record pace. Due to this onslaught of COVID-19 cases, many communities are facing health care worker staffing shortages and full emergency rooms.

It is outrageous that the Republican leadership has stalled progress on a comprehensive COVID-19 relief bill, despite the obvious and growing need. There is no excuse for Congress failing to adequately confront the public health and economic crises caused by the pandemic.

This is not a time for small measures. As part of a larger package, Congress must get serious about helping small businesses. We support our local communities across the country by supporting our small businesses, many of which are in desperate straits right now.

In Maryland, Gov. Larry Hogan has reimposed new restrictions to control the spread of the virus. The cost of these necessary measures will fall most heavily on small businesses in the food services, hospitality and events, and travel and tourism industries, which are the most reliant on large gatherings to make a profit.

We can help our small business by providing greater support for state and local governments. Small businesses need local services to remain stable. We must provide support to schools to so they can operate safely, whether it's in person, virtual or hybrid. We must support the more than 12 million Americans who remain unemployed, they are the customers who shop at small businesses. Most important, we need a national testing and tracing strategy, because small businesses will continue to struggle until the American people are confident it is safe to go out, shop, use services and fully participate in the economy.

In addition to tackling the root of the problem, a comprehensive bill must target small business aid to the hardest-hit, most vulnerable small businesses—including Black, Hispanic, Asian and women-owned businesses—as well as small businesses in the industries that have been most affected by COVID-19.

This pandemic is not going to disappear overnight, despite advances in vaccine research. Small businesses need more than the eight additional weeks of payroll assistance through the Paycheck Protection Program. As the lead Democrat on the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, I have introduced legislation to reopen PPP for small businesses that did not get to apply for an initial loan before the program closed on Aug. 8, and provide a second round of PPP for vulnerable small businesses.

We in Congress must recognize that many small businesses, especially restaurants and retail shops, are not in a position to take on new debt. My bill would appropriate an additional $50 billion to the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program to continue providing small businesses with low-cost, long-term loans and create a new $40 billion Lifeline Grant within the program, which would provide grants of up to $50,000 to small businesses that have suffered a significant economic loss. The bill would also provide an additional $10 billion for the EIDL Advance grants program.

The bill creates a new $15 billion grant program that will allow state and local government agencies to deploy funds to the businesses in their communities that need it the most. We have already seen the benefits of this model in Baltimore, where the Baltimore Development Corporation has provided support to small businesses based on need and other factors, not on a first-come, first-served basis. The bill also includes a new $15 billion grant program for small businesses in the events industry, including music venues, theaters and cinemas, which were among the first businesses to close and among the last to reopen.

A comprehensive COVID-19 bill is the only adequate response to the crises we face today. In March, the Senate passed the CARES Act 97-0. We must come together again as the virus rages on.

The CARES Act dealt directly with the COVID-19 pandemic itself—providing funding to public health professionals for testing, tracing and vaccine development. The bill also provided support to state and local governments, as well as small businesses, families, schools and Americans on unemployment insurance.

For the sake of the country let us sit down to negotiate a bipartisan comprehensive COVID-19 bill that will keep our communities safe, get Americans back to work and save small businesses.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

5 things to check before you buy real estate

FINE PRINT

By JORDAN SUNDELL
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jordan Sundell is a lawyer. His practice primarily focuses on business, real estate, estate planning, and asset protection. You can find his columns here every other Tuesday as well as on The Fine Print on Facebook. You can contact Mr. Sundell via this newspaper at editor@saipantribune.com or 235-6397/235-2440.

You found some land. The location is prime, the view even better, and the price surprisingly reasonable. But only if you pay right away. Should you?

Probably not. Sure, sometimes we stumble into deals because the other side needs to act fast. But usually urgency is a sign to slow down, not speed up.

In fact, you shouldn't expect a real-estate deal to go fast. That's because buying property is less like swiping your credit card during a Black Friday sale and more like preparing a Thanksgiving feast for the family. The process involves a variety of steps, each of which needs to be done right, if you want a happy result.

One of the most important steps in that process is known as due diligence. During it, you will want to investigate the property to make sure you are getting exactly what you expect before money changes hands.

First, figure out who actually owns the property. Obvious, right? But people occasionally buy property from people who don't actually own the property.

In some cases, a seller mistakenly believes that they own the property. For example, a family might agree on how to distribute property after a loved one passed away without going through the probate process. And then later memories change, leaving ownership disputed.

In less-innocent cases, the seller is lying. They tell you that the property has been in their family for years; they may even cry over the idea of parting ways with it. But they assure you that if you pay right away, they will let it go.

The easiest and safest way to find out whether the seller actually owns the property is to obtain a preliminary title report. A PTR is not a government document; instead, it is a report issued by a title-insurance company describing the chain of ownership from the first owner to the current owner. It will also say if the property has been leased and whether there are any mortgages or other liens on the property.

You should get this document directly from the title-insurance company, especially if you have any doubts about the seller. On Saipan, two companies currently issue PTRs: Security Title and Pacific American Title. The first is located on Capital Hill; the second is in Susupe.

Second, double-check the property's boundaries. Just because a seller claims that a property has certain boundaries doesn't make it so.

Take a common example. Let's say a father owns a big chunk of land and then passes away, leaving five children. Following probate, each child gets one-fifth of the land. Over 20 years, each uses the land with little thought about the formal boundaries of each property. Later, one of the children sells their piece to someone outside the family. What happens next? That's right: Disagreements about where one property ends and the other begins.

And those disagreements can turn especially expensive if there's a house built over the boundary line, a surprisingly common occurrence.

So, how does a careful buyer prevent boundary problems from transforming their investment into a nightmare? Get a boundary survey from a seasoned surveyor. Doing so will confirm access points and boundary lines as well as identifying any encroachments.

Third, make sure that you can use the property for the purpose you intend. You may not be able to. That is because Saipan has a zoning law establishing how different areas of the island can be used. For example, if a part of the island has been designated as a residential area, then it generally cannot be used for a nonresidential purpose like a hotel, a hospital, or a factory—although occasionally the Zoning Board or the Legislature may grant an exception.

Other zoning restrictions may also apply. The Zoning Law is long and detailed with many technical requirements stretching from how far to set back buildings from roads, boundaries, and high watermarks to how much parking is needed to how much of a storefront window can be used for advertisements.

Fourth, investigate whether the property has any environmental issues. For instance, is there a wetland on the property? If so, CNMI law strongly restricts and sometimes flatly prohibits development. Is the property in a floodplain? Again, development restrictions may apply (on top of all the other issues that apply to building in a flood-prone location). Are there any endangered animals on the property? If so, you will need to reach into your wallet to pay remediation costs. You may also need to halt your project until the issue has been addressed, a process that can take half a year or more.

Fifth, check whether the property is part of a planned community. Though more common in the U.S. mainland than here, the CNMI has some planned communities too. For example, if you buy a condo, an apartment, or a house that's part of a subdivision, community rules often apply to everyone in the planned community. These rules can strictly control where you can park, how you decorate your property, and so on. So you'll want to know what you are getting yourself into before you buy.

This column is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be taken as legal advice. For your specific case, consult a lawyer.

American democracy is showing its flaws. But the alternatives are worse

By NICHOLAS GOLDBERG
Los Angeles Times

Nicholas Goldberg is an associate editor and op-ed columnist for the Los Angeles Times.

Sometimes it feels like democracy is just too dysfunctional.

Voters are disengaged and uninformed. Congress is hyperpartisan—and so self-serving it can't govern effectively.

Between our increasingly politicized courts, our 18th century constitution, our antiquated Electoral College and our modern-day corporate lobbyists and billionaire donors, it sometimes seems like the system was designed to fail.

Making matters much worse, we've suffered for four years under a president whose contempt for rules, norms and institutions has further undermined the system—and who is now engaging in a brazen and extraordinary refusal to concede the election he has lost.

It's no wonder scholars like Larry Diamond are raising serious questions about the future of democracy in the United States.

I called Diamond, a political science professor at Stanford who has written for decades about what makes democracies endure and what makes them fail. "There's been an existential crisis of democracy during the Trump presidency," he told me. "There's a real question whether it will survive in the United States."

It's all very disheartening. But just when I get most disillusioned with the system we have, I remember what I've seen around the world, where people often struggle for entire lifetimes in hopes of building or protecting the kind of rights and rules that we have here in the U.S.

As Trump continued his outrageous assault on the election results, I thought about the visit I received in my Los Angeles office from Joshua Wong in 2015.

Wong, then 18, was already a hero at home in Hong Kong. Fresh-faced, determined and optimistic, he told me about how he fit his activism on behalf of democracy into a schedule that also included doing his homework. Since then, Wong has been repeatedly arrested and imprisoned, but he continues to risk his life to secure the kind of freedoms it's easy to take for granted here. And he isn't alone in his struggle against the continuing Chinese crackdowns. The last time I was in Hong Kong, in 2019, it was a time of mass protests, and tens of thousands of courageous residents turned out day after day to fight what may yet be a losing battle to preserve the freedom and rights they've enjoyed in the past.

I also think of the places I've covered as a journalist that were truly unfree and undemocratic. Worst of all was Saddam Hussein's Baghdad, a dark and unhappy city in the late 1990s where fear was palpable in the streets and in people's homes, a city where omnipresent soldiers and secret police repressed all dissent. I felt scared the whole time I was there. Not long before my visit, Hussein had won reelection as president of Iraq with 99.96% of the vote. Now that was election fraud.

On another trip, I covered a presidential election in Iran in which dozens of candidates were disqualified from the ballot because they didn't meet with the approval of the country's mullah and ayatollahs.

It was encouraging for a time to watch the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as they enthusiastically began to build a country of their own—including issuing postage stamps, opening a stock exchange, building an airport, establishing a parliament and holding national presidential elections. Soon, said Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, "we will have our own telephone country code." For many Palestinians, the exercise in nation-building was a joyous one, a chance to finally control their own destinies. Many harbored hopes—against steep odds—that the emerging nation would be a democracy, one of the few in the region. But the whole enterprise collapsed shortly after it began when the Oslo peace process between Palestinians and Israelis failed.

I came back to the U.S. from my years as a foreign correspondent with a new respect for the democracy in which I grew up.

Of course it's flawed. It is too often inequitable or unfair; it's disparities in wealth and power are unacceptable; its history of racial injustice is shameful. Of course we need to move past tribalism, polarization and bigotry, to implement reform and to find effective leaders who will put country ahead of party.

But we're far luckier than much of the world, where anti-democratic movements are again gaining ground, including in Hungary, Poland, Turkey and elsewhere. I realize I'm setting a low bar for comparison, but the point is we're lucky to have a firm foundation on which to build.

Winston Churchill's assertion that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others may be overused, but it's true.

At the moment, we remain remarkably free in the United States. We voice our dissent boisterously. Our electoral system has once again proved itself honest, despite the current president's assertions otherwise. Our institutions were battered, but they mostly withstood the Trump onslaught.

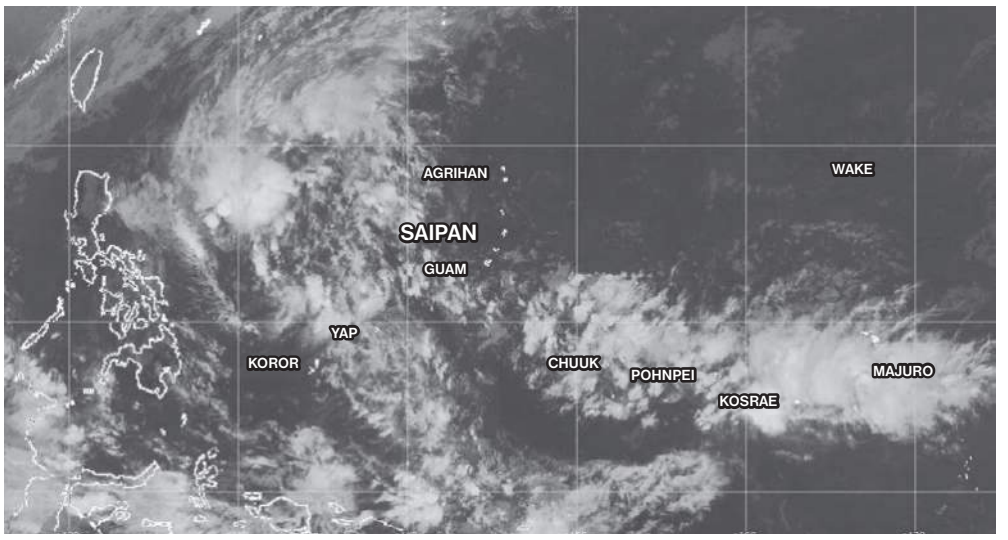
Now we need to fight to keep it that way. Making democracy work is a national project; it doesn't just happen on its own. It takes engagement, patience, struggle and a measure of faith. In contrast, the surest way to see it fail is to take it for granted.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Breezy. Partly sunny. Isolated showers in the morning, then isolated showers and thunderstorms by afternoon. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Cloudy with numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers and thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
87° / 77°	87° / 77°	87° / 77°	87° / 77°	87° / 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:18 AM, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar show patchy morning clouds and showers across the region. More showers are seen farther east and southeast of Guam as convergent trade-wind flow links up with divergent flow aloft. Seas are around 8 to 9 feet with higher seas across eastern waters of the CNMI.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:27 AM	5:44 PM
Wednesday	6:27 AM	5:45 PM
Thursday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM
Saturday	6:29 AM	5:45 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	6:53 AM	6:25 PM
Wednesday	-	7:46 AM	7:15 PM
Thursday	-	8:40 AM	8:07 PM
Friday	-	9:32 AM	9:03 PM
Saturday	-	10:23 AM	9:59 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	72° / 59°
Beijing	Sunny	45° / 21°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°
Honolulu	Showers	82° / 73°
London	Sunny	43° / 34°
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 53°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°
Melbourne	Rain	66° / 55°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	78° / 71°
New York	Showers	53° / 36°
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 39°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	39° / 28°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	48° / 36°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 39°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	70° / 54°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 48°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	45° / 32°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	50° / 39°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	54° / 34°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:04 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.37
9:06 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.66
2:28 PM	LOW TIDE	1.03
7:17 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.63

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Jewelry shop **Sophia Althea** opens today

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Sophia Althea located on the second floor of D' Elegance Building in Garapan will have its grand opening today where you can find unique pieces of jewelry perfect for your collection or as a gift for any occasion for a loved one that will never be forgotten and treasured.

Sophia Althea owner Mary Jane Alejandro-Diestro said that the shop was borne out of passion and wise investment.

"Collecting delicate pieces of jewelry is one of my passions and gold jewelry is a perfect investment because of its high value in the market. I combined the two together—my passion as my investment and decided to share it with the people of Saipan. As we all know gold jewelry are pawnable too so it's also a big help in case of emergency," she said.

For more information, call (670) 233-6060 or (670) 285-7170

"We currently have an ongoing 20% off promo for all our silver items. On our grand opening day today, we will have additional promo on selected gold items—10%-30% off. Our products are mainly 18K and 21K gold (not plated) necklaces, bracelets, earrings, rings, anklets, and set jewelry. Recently, we started selling 925 Italy silver items," she added.

Alejandro-Diestro said that she makes sure that she gets various designs so people can have a set that is unique that others will not have. "I make sure to get different designs so people won't be wearing the same…. Our prices are reasonable and that's why most of our customers keep coming back and inviting more friends and family to check and purchase from our store," she said

"The design of our items are always updated and I make sure that every month we have a new shipment coming so people can see and buy the latest designs and trending pieces of jewelry in the market… I update and advertise my items through my social media so that the public can easily browse through the selection of items and anyone can inquire more information by giving me a call or sending a message," she added.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sophia Althea opens today at 10am. Shop and invest on fine jewelry available at Sophia Althea.

Sophia Althea was established four years ago and started by consignment. "I started under Ifashion Salon and now we are making a big step opening my very own store… Today we will have a small shop blessing… prepared bento food and drinks to be served to limited guests and there will be giveaways to our customers," Alejandro-Diesto said.

"Every customer is valuable to us. I want them to be proud, happy and satisfied after purchasing jewelry from us," she added

Sophia Althea is open everyday except Wednesday and Thursday from 10am to 6 pm. For more information, call (670) 233-6060 or (670) 285-7170 or check their Facebook page: Sophia Althea.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Enjoy 20%-30 % off on selected jewelry at Sophia Althea located in the second floor of D' Elegance Building in Garapan.

Congress returns with virus aid, federal funding unresolved

WASHINGTON (AP)—After months of shadowboxing amid a tense and toxic campaign, Capitol Hill's main players are returning for one final, perhaps futile, attempt at deal-making on a challenging menu of year-end business.

COVID-19 relief, a $1.4 trillion catchall spending package, and defense policy — and a final burst of judicial nominees — dominate a truncated two- or three-week session occurring as the coronavirus pandemic rockets out of control in President Donald Trump's final weeks in office.

The only absolute must-do business is preventing a government shutdown when a temporary spending bill expires on Dec. 11. The route preferred by top lawmakers like House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is to agree upon and pass an omnibus spending bill for the government. But it may be difficult to overcome bitter divisions regarding a long-delayed COVID relief package that's a top priority of business, state and local governments, educators and others.

Time is working against lawmakers as well, as is the Capitol's emerging status as a COVID hotspot. The House has truncated its schedule and Senate Republicans are joining Democrats in forgoing the in-person lunch meetings that usually anchor their workweeks. It'll take serious, good-faith conversations among top players to determine what's possible, but those haven't transpired yet.

Top items for December's lame-duck session:

KEEPING THE GOVERNMENT OPEN

At a bare minimum, lawmakers need to keep the government running by passing a stopgap spending bill known as a continuing resolution, which would punt $1.4 trillion worth of unfinished agency spending into next year.

That's a typical way to deal with a handoff to a new administration, but McConnell and Pelosi are two veterans of the Capitol's appropriations culture and are pressing hard for a catchall spending package. A battle over using budget sleight of hand to add a 2 percentage point, $12 billion increase to domestic programs to accommodate rapidly growing veterans health care spending is an issue, as are Trump's demands for U.S-Mexico border wall funding.

Getting Trump to sign the measure is another challenge. Two years ago he sparked a lengthy partial government shutdown over the border wall, but both sides would like to clear away the pile of unfinished legislation to give the Biden administration a fresh start. The changeover in administrations probably wouldn't affect an omnibus deal very much.

At issue are the 12 annual spending bills comprising the portion of the government's budget that passes through Congress each year on a bipartisan basis. Whatever approach passes, it's likely to contain a batch of unfinished leftovers such as extending expiring health care policies and tax provisions and continuing the authorization for the government's flood insurance program.

COVID-19 RELIEF

Democrats have battled with Republicans and the White House for months over a fresh installment of COVID relief that all sides say they want. But a lack of good faith and an unwillingness to embark on compromises that might lead either side out of their political comfort zones have helped keep another rescue package on ice.

The aid remains out of reach despite a fragile economy and out-of-control increases in coronavirus cases, especially in Midwest GOP strongholds. McConnell is a potent force for a smaller — but still sizable — package and has supplanted Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin as the most important Republican force in the negotiations.

Pelosi seems to have overplayed her hand as she held out for $2 trillion-plus right up until the election. The results of the election, which saw Democrats lose seats in the House, appear to have significantly undercut her position, but she is holding firm on another round of aid to state and local governments.

UK says Brexit trade talks with EU are in their 'last week'

LONDON (AP)—Britain's foreign minister said Sunday there is only about a week left for the U.K. and the European Union to strike a post-Brexit trade deal, with fishing rights the major obstacle to an agreement.

As talks continued between the two sides in London, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said "I think we are into the last week or so of substantive negotiations."

The U.K. left the EU early this year, but remained part of the 27-nation bloc's economic embrace during an 11-month transition as the two sides tried to negotiate a new free-trade deal to take effect Jan. 1. Talks have already slipped past the mid-November date long set as a deadline for agreement to be reached if it is to be approved by lawmakers in Britain and the EU before year's end.

Despite the stalemate, Raab told Sky News that "there's a deal to be done."

He said the two sides had made progress on "level playing field" issues — the standards the U.K. must meet to export into the EU.

The biggest hurdle appears to be fish, a small part of the economy with an outsized symbolic importance for Europe's maritime nations. EU countries want their boats to be able to keep fishing in British waters, while the U.K. insists it must control access and quotas.

"On fisheries, there is a point of principle: As we leave the transition, we are an independent coastal state and we've got to be able to control our waters," Raab said.

EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier, who met through the weekend with U.K. counterpart David Frost, has said there are still "significant divergences."

If there is no deal, New Year's Day will bring huge disruption, with the overnight imposition of tariffs and other barriers to U.K.-EU trade. That will hurt both sides, but the burden will fall most heavily on Britain, which does almost half its trade with the EU.

Nation

Biden chooses an all-female senior White House press team

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—President-elect Joe Biden will have an all-female senior communications team at his White House, reflecting his stated desire to build out a diverse White House team as well as what's expected to be a return to a more traditional press operation.

Biden campaign communications director Kate Bedingfield will serve as Biden's White House communications director. Jen Psaki, a longtime Democratic spokeswoman, will be his press secretary.

Four of the seven top communications roles at the White House will be filled by women of color, and it's the first time the entire senior White House communications team will be entirely female.

President Donald Trump upended the ways in which his administration communicated with the press. In contrast with administrations past, Trump's communications team held few press briefings, and those that did occur were often combative affairs riddled with inaccuracies and falsehoods.

Trump himself sometimes served as his own press secretary, taking questions from the media, and he often bypassed the White House press corps entirely by dialing into his favorite Fox News shows.

In a statement announcing the White House communications team, Biden said: "Communicating directly and truthfully to the American people is one of the most important duties of a President, and this team will be entrusted with the tremendous responsibility of connecting the American people to the White House."

He added: "These qualified, experienced communicators bring diverse perspectives to their work and a shared commitment to building this country back better."

Bedingfield and Psaki are veterans of the Obama administration. Bedingfield served as communications director for Biden while he was vice president, and Psaki was a White House communications director and a spokesperson at the State Department.

Others joining the White House communications staff are:

■ Karine Jean Pierre, who was Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' chief of staff, will serve as a principal deputy press secretary for the president-elect. She's another Obama administration alum, having served as a regional political director for the White House office of political affairs.

■ Pili Tobar, who was communications director for coalitions on Biden's campaign, will be his deputy White House communications director. She most recently was deputy director for America's Voice, an immigration reform advocacy group, and was a press staffer for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Three Biden campaign senior advisers are being appointed to top communications roles:

■ Ashley Etienne, a former communications director for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, will serve as Harris' communications director.

■ Symone Sanders, another senior adviser on the Biden campaign, will be Harris' senior adviser and chief spokesperson.

■ Elizabeth Alexander, who served as the former vice president's press secretary and his communications director while he was a U.S. senator from Delaware, will serve as Jill Biden's communications director.

After his campaign went virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic, Biden faced some of his own criticism for not being accessible to reporters. But near the end of the campaign, he answered questions from the press more frequently, and his transition team has held weekly briefings since he was elected president.

The choice of a number of Obama administration veterans — many with deep relationships with the Washington press corps—also suggests a return to a more congenial relationship with the press.

Fauci: US may see 'surge upon surge' of virus in weeks ahead

By TAMARA LUSH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks during a news conference with the coronavirus task force at the White House in Washington, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020.

The nation's top infectious disease expert said Sunday that the U.S. may see "surge upon a surge" of the coronavirus in the weeks after Thanksgiving, and he does not expect current recommendations around social distancing to be relaxed before Christmas.

Meanwhile, in a major reversal, New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio said the nation's largest school system will reopen to in-person learning and increase the number of days a week many children attend class. The announcement came just 11 days after the Democratic mayor said schools would shut down because of rising COVID-19 cases.

"We feel confident that we can keep schools safe," he said.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told ABC's "This Week" that the level of infection in the U.S. would not "all of a sudden turn around."

"So clearly in the next few weeks, we're going to have the same sort of thing. And perhaps even two or three weeks down the line ... we may see a surge upon a surge," he said.

Fauci addressed the school issue, saying that spread "among children and from children is not really very big at all, not like one would have suspected. So let's try to get the kids back, but let's try to mitigate the things that maintain and just push the kind of community spread that we're trying to avoid," he said.

Fauci also appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," where he made similar remarks, adding that it's "not too late" for people traveling home after Thanksgiving to help curb the virus by wearing masks, staying distant from others and avoiding large groups of people.

The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in the United States topped 200,000 for the first time Friday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Since January, when the first infections were reported in the U.S., the nation's total number of cases has surpassed 13 million. More than 265,000 people have died.

Fauci said the arrival of vaccines offers a "light at the end of the tunnel." This coming week, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will meet with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to discuss a rollout of the vaccine, he said.

He added that President-elect Joe Biden should focus on distributing vaccines in an "efficient and equitable way." Fauci also said he planned to push the new administration for a rigorous testing program.

Health care workers will likely be among the first to get the vaccine, with the first vaccinations happening before the end of December, followed by many more in January, February and March, he said.

"So if we can hang together as a country and do these kinds of things to blunt these surges until we get a substantial proportion of the population vaccinated, we can get through this," Fauci said.

Other experts agreed that the coming weeks would be difficult, especially since so many traveled over the holiday and held in-person dinners indoors.

Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus response coordinator, said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation" that Americans who traveled this past week should try to avoid people over 65. She said that those who were around others for Thanksgiving "have to assume that you were exposed and you became infected and you really need to get tested in the next week."

Meanwhile, a busy travel weekend continued, despite warnings for Americans to stay close to home and limit their holiday gatherings.

Aside from the Thanksgiving holiday itself, anywhere from 800,000 to more than 1 million travelers made their way through U.S. airport checkpoints on any day during the past week, according to Transportation Security Administration statistics. That's a far cry from the 2.3 to 2.6 million seen daily last year. But it far surpasses the number of travelers early in the pandemic, when daily totals fell below 100,000 on some spring days.

More COVID-19 restrictions were in store for California starting Monday. Los Angeles County will impose a lockdown calling for its 10 million residents to stay home. Santa Clara County, which includes San Jose, is banning all high school, collegiate and professional sports and imposing a quarantine for anyone traveling into the region from more than 150 miles away.

Back in New York, some elementary schools and pre-kindergarten programs will resume classes Dec. 7, a week from Monday, the mayor said. Others will take longer to reopen.

The plan for reopening middle and high schools is still being developed, de Blasio said.

About 190,000 students will be eligible to return to classrooms in the first round of reopening, just a fraction of the more than 1 million total pupils in the system. The great majority of parents have opted to have their kids learn remotely by computer.

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Nation

Biden chooses an all-female senior White House press team

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—President-elect Joe Biden will have an all-female senior communications team at his White House, reflecting his stated desire to build out a diverse White House team as well as what's expected to be a return to a more traditional press operation.

Biden campaign communications director Kate Bedingfield will serve as Biden's White House communications director. Jen Psaki, a longtime Democratic spokeswoman, will be his press secretary.

Four of the seven top communications roles at the White House will be filled by women of color, and it's the first time the entire senior White House communications team will be entirely female.

President Donald Trump upended the ways in which his administration communicated with the press. In contrast with administrations past, Trump's communications team held few press briefings, and those that did occur were often combative affairs riddled with inaccuracies and falsehoods.

Trump himself sometimes served as his own press secretary, taking questions from the media, and he often bypassed the White House press corps entirely by dialing into his favorite Fox News shows.

In a statement announcing the White House communications team, Biden said: "Communicating directly and truthfully to the American people is one of the most important duties of a President, and this team will be entrusted with the tremendous responsibility of connecting the American people to the White House."

He added: "These qualified, experienced communicators bring diverse perspectives to their work and a shared commitment to building this country back better."

Bedingfield and Psaki are veterans of the Obama administration. Bedingfield served as communications director for Biden while he was vice president, and Psaki was a White House communications director and a spokesperson at the State Department.

Others joining the White House communications staff are:

■ Karine Jean Pierre, who was Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' chief of staff, will serve as a principal deputy press secretary for the president-elect. She's another Obama administration alum, having served as a regional political director for the White House office of political affairs.

■ Pili Tobar, who was communications director for coalitions on Biden's campaign, will be his deputy White House communications director. She most recently was deputy director for America's Voice, an immigration reform advocacy group, and was a press staffer for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Three Biden campaign senior advisers are being appointed to top communications roles:

■ Ashley Etienne, a former communications director for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, will serve as Harris' communications director.

■ Symone Sanders, another senior adviser on the Biden campaign, will be Harris' senior adviser and chief spokesperson.

■ Elizabeth Alexander, who served as the former vice president's press secretary and his communications director while he was a U.S. senator from Delaware, will serve as Jill Biden's communications director.

After his campaign went virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic, Biden faced some of his own criticism for not being accessible to reporters. But near the end of the campaign, he answered questions from the press more frequently, and his transition team has held weekly briefings since he was elected president.

The choice of a number of Obama administration veterans — many with deep relationships with the Washington press corps—also suggests a

Fauci: US may see 'surge upon surge' of virus in weeks ahead

By TAMARA LUSH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks during a news conference with the coronavirus task force at the White House in Washington, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020.

The nation's top infectious disease expert said Sunday that the U.S. may see "surge upon a surge" of the coronavirus in the weeks after Thanksgiving, and he does not expect current recommendations around social distancing to be relaxed before Christmas.

Meanwhile, in a major reversal, New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio said the nation's largest school system will reopen to in-person learning and increase the number of days a week many children attend class. The announcement came just 11 days after the Democratic mayor said schools would shut down because of rising COVID-19 cases.

"We feel confident that we can keep schools safe," he said.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told ABC's "This Week" that the level of infection in the U.S. would not "all of a sudden turn around."

"So clearly in the next few weeks, we're going to have the same sort of thing. And perhaps even two or three weeks down the line ... we may see a surge upon a surge," he said.

Fauci addressed the school issue, saying that spread "among children and from children is not really very big at all, not like one would have suspected. So let's try to get the kids back, but let's try to mitigate the things that maintain and just push the kind of community spread that we're trying to avoid," he said.

Fauci also appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," where he made similar remarks, adding that it's "not too late" for people traveling home after Thanksgiving to help curb the virus by wearing masks, staying distant from others and avoiding large groups of people.

The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in the United States topped 200,000 for the first time Friday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Since January, when the first infections were reported in the U.S., the nation's total number of cases has surpassed 13 million. More than 265,000 people have died.

Fauci said the arrival of vaccines offers a "light at the end of the tunnel." This coming week, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will meet with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to discuss a rollout of the vaccine, he said.

He added that President-elect Joe Biden should focus on distributing vaccines in an "efficient and equitable way." Fauci also said he planned to push the new administration for a rigorous testing program.

Health care workers will likely be among the first to get the vaccine, with the first vaccinations happening before the end of December, followed by many more in January, February and March, he said.

"So if we can hang together as a country and do these kinds of things to blunt these surges until we get a substantial proportion of the population vaccinated, we can get through this," Fauci said.

Other experts agreed that the coming weeks would be difficult, especially since so many traveled over the holiday and held in-person dinners indoors.

Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus response coordinator, said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation" that Americans who traveled this past week should try to avoid people over 65. She said that those who were around others for Thanksgiving "have to assume that you were exposed and you became infected and you really need to get tested in the next week."

Meanwhile, a busy travel weekend continued, despite warnings for Americans to stay close to home and limit their holiday gatherings.

Aside from the Thanksgiving holiday itself, anywhere from 800,000 to more than 1 million travelers made their way through U.S. airport checkpoints on any day during the past week, according to Transportation Security Administration statistics. That's a far cry from the 2.3 to 2.6 million seen daily last year. But it far surpasses the number of travelers early in the pandemic, when daily totals fell below 100,000 on some spring days.

More COVID-19 restrictions were in store for California starting Monday. Los Angeles County will impose a lockdown calling for its 10 million residents to stay home. Santa Clara County, which includes San Jose, is banning all high school, collegiate and professional sports and imposing a quarantine for anyone traveling into the region from more than 150 miles away.

Back in New York, some elementary schools and pre-kindergarten programs will resume classes Dec. 7, a week from Monday, the mayor said. Others will take longer to reopen.

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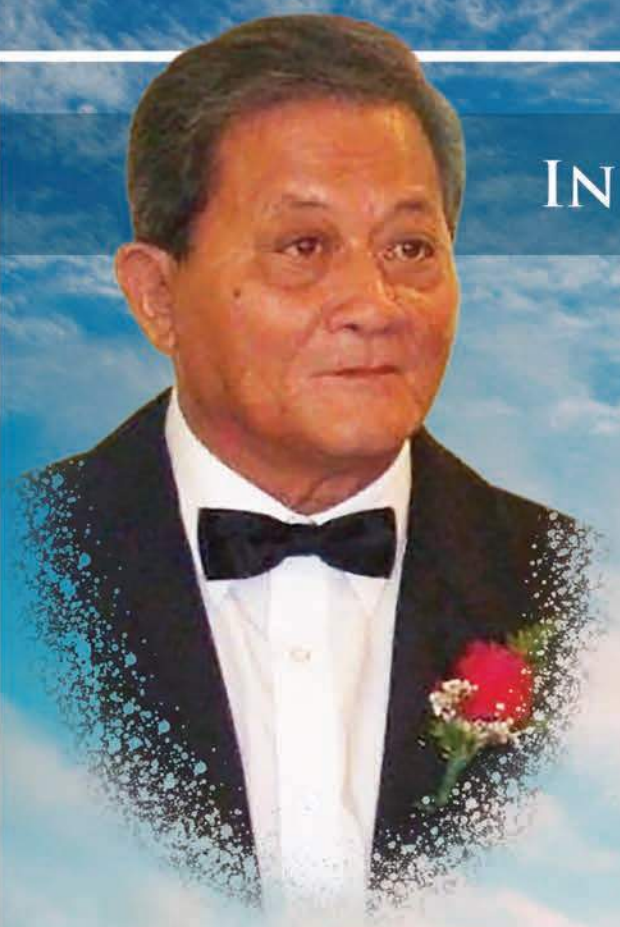


IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

†Roman Aguero DeleonGuerrero

"Kobe"

Born to Life: August 10, 1945
Born to eternal Life: November 23, 2020

In His New Life, He now Joins His:

Wife: †Rufina Advento Pagtakhan
Grandson: †Dominic DeleonGuerrero Taitano
Parents: †Guillermo Cabrera DeleonGuerrero
†Juana Quidachay Aguero
Parents in-Law: †Marcelo A. Pagtakhan
†Segunda SJ. Advento

Siblings & In-Law:
†Elizabeth A. DeleonGuerrero
†Consolacion A. DeleonGuerrero
†Pasgual A. DeleonGuerrero
†Vicente A. DeleonGuerrero
†Jose A. DeleonGuerrero
†Remedio DLG. & †Antonio T. Villagomez
†Rosario DLG. & †Daniel T. Villagomez
†Takeo Nakazato
†Francisca S. DeleonGuerrero
†John Pangelinan
†Diego Urumelog
†Ronald Hansen

†Adelaida A. Polidario
†Donato A. Pagtakhan
†Emma A. Pagtakhan
†Lito A. Pagtakhan
†Wilma Pagtakhan
†Augusto Dames
†Tito Yancha
†Rogelio Consignado

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his :

Children:
Deborah Deleon Guerrero (*Dylan, Draven*)
Lynnette DLG & Kevin Castro (*Kasey, Kaya, Kamryn*)
Lavinia DLG & Jeffrey Dela Cruz (*Jasmine, Jayda, Jackie, Jared*)
Alma DLG & Patrick P. Sablan (*Bryce, Madison, Colin*)
Evangeline DLG & Steven Bautista (*Cody, Kara*)

Siblings & In-Laws :
Jesus A. & Victoria T. DeleonGuerrero
Angelina A. DeleonGuerrero
Mariana DLG. Hansen
Lorenzo A. DeleonGuerrero & Angie Camacho
Ramona DLG. Pangelinan
Lourdes DLG. Nakazato
Bernadita DLG. Urumelog

In-Laws :
Rustico A. Pagtakhan
Mario A. Pagtakhan
Sandra A. Pagtakhan
Lina A. Pagtakhan
Pedro A. & Elizabeth Pagtakhan
Yolanda Pagtakhan
Leila A. Pagtakhan
Andreo A. & Beth Pagtakhan
Cecilia A. Pagtakhan & Lito Andal
Fidencio Polidario

Funeral services will be held in Saturday, December 5th 2020. His remains will be at Mt. Carmel Cathedral for viewing and visitation beginning at 8:00 AM. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 AM followed by interment service at Sanctuario Pax Memorial Gardens, Kagman, Saipan where he will be laid peacefully with his wife †Rufina.

Your thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated. Thank you. Si Yu'us Ma'ase. Maraming Salamat.

Children and Family of the late
†Roman A. and †Rufina P. Deleon Guerrero

World

UK stocks up on vaccines, to start virus shots in days

LONDON (AP)—Britain said Sunday it has secured 2 million more doses of a promising coronavirus vaccine as it gears up to launch within days the country's most ambitious inoculation program in decades.

The U.K. has had Europe's deadliest coronavirus outbreak, with more than 58,000 confirmed virus-related deaths. It now hopes to hit a more positive milestone by becoming one of the first countries in the world to start vaccinating its population against COVID-19.

The U.K. government has agreed to buy more than 350 million doses of vaccines from seven different producers, should they prove effective, as it prepares to vaccinate as many of the country's 67 million people as possible.

The Department of Health said Sunday it had increased its order for a vaccine developed by U.S. firm Moderna from 5 million to 7 million doses, enough for 3.5 million people.

The Moderna vaccine is expected to be referred soon to the U.K.'s Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, to see if it is safe and effective. Two other vaccines — one developed by Pfizer and German firm BioNTech, the other by Oxford University and AstraZeneca — are already being assessed by the regulator, the final stage before being rolled out.

Britain has ordered 40 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and 100 million doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

Hospitals in England have been told they could receive the first doses of the Pfizer shot as early as the week of Dec. 7 if it receives approval, the Guardian and Financial Times reported. The U.S. vaccination program also hopes to begin inoculating some Americans in December.

The government says frontline health care workers and nursing home residents will be the first to be vaccinated, followed by older people, starting with those over 80. The plan is to work down the age and risk groups until everyone 18 and over has been inoculated.

Peter Openshaw, professor of experimental medicine at Imperial College London, said he "wouldn't be too surprised if an announcement would be made within the next two weeks, possibly even as early as next week."

Non-medical staff including volunteer first-aiders are already being trained to give the shots, which will be administered at around 1,000 community vaccination centers and 40 to 50 large-scale facilities in stadiums and conference venues, according to a government planning document.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said officials hope to vaccinate "the vast majority of the people who need the most protection by Easter."

Writing in the Mail on Sunday, Johnson said the roll-out of a vaccine could be "just days away." But he said there would not be a quick end to the onerous restrictions on business and everyday life that have been imposed to curb the spread of the virus.

"There are still long weeks and months ahead before we can be completely confident that we can vaccinate enough people in the country, and thereby remove enough targets for the virus, in order to beat the disease," he wrote.

A four-week national lockdown in England is due to end Wednesday, and will be replaced by a three-tiered system of regional measures. The vast majority of the country is being put into the upper two tiers, meaning most people will be barred from meeting up with friends indoors, pubs and restaurants still face restrictions and everything from large weddings to choir practices are being banned.

Thai pro-democracy protesters rally outside army base

BANGKOK (AP)—Thailand's indefatigable pro-democracy activists took to Bangkok's streets again Sunday, this time to protest the army as they push forward with their campaign for sweeping reforms, including to the nation's monarchy.

Around 800 protesters marched to the base of the 11th Infantry Regiment, which is closely associated with the country's royal palace. Their number grew to well over 1,000 as they settled in for speeches by protest leaders.

An advance group of protesters had already pulled away two decrepit buses that had been used to block the entrance to the base and removed strands of razor wire. A large contingent of riot police, several rows deep, stood their ground in front of the gate but no violence was reported by the end of the rally.

The protesters believe that the army undermines democracy in Thailand, and that King Maha Vajiralongkorn wields too much power and influence in what is supposed to be a democratic constitutional monarchy.

The student-led protesters for months now have been demanding reforms to make the monarchy more accountable, even though criticism of the institution has long been considered taboo and comments judged defamatory of the king and key royals are punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

"People should be able to criticize the king. People should be able to inspect what he does. In this way, people will respect and love him more," said activist Somyot Pruksakasemsuk, who served seven years in prison for defaming the monarchy and is facing criminal charges in connection with this year's protests.

The protesters also want Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha and his government to step down and the constitution to be amended to make it more democratic.

As the army chief in 2014, Prayuth led a coup ousting an elected government. His military junta oversaw the rewriting of the constitution, which shifted power from elected politicians to unelected bodies, and he was returned to power after elections held under the new rules last year.

Prayuth faces a legal challenge on Wednesday, when the Constitutional Court is to rule on whether he illegally stayed in army housing after he retired from the military at the end of September 2014. If found guilty, he could be forced out of the prime minister's post. Protest leader Parit "Penguin" Chiwarak urged the crowd to rally outside the court on the day of the verdict.

The site of Sunday's protest was symbolic for several reasons.

Last year, the 11th Infantry Regiment was shifted from the army's chain of command and made part of the Royal Security Command, answerable directly to the king. The action was one of several denounced by protesters as an example of the palace taking powers that should not be allowed under constitutional rule.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW:

VW Atlas Cross Sport:

Fewer passengers means more room for fun stuff

By BARRY SPYKER
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

TNS

The 2020 Volkswagen Atlas Cross Sport

What do you get when you strip the third row from a popular SUV, lay protective rubber mats back there instead, and then rake back the roof for a sportier profile?

Well, you get a sexier, roomier two-row activity vehicle, the 2020 Volkswagen Atlas Cross Sport. It's a five-seater modified from the family hauling Atlas. It is 3 inches shorter and has a 2.6-inch lower roof, but still has gaping space for tents and duffle bags, baseball and golf equipment. Or the $500 jogging stroller (!!) that grandpa is delivering to his precious baby granddaughter and her mama.

Volkswagen figures the all-new Cross Sport will appeal to empty nesters as well as to couples and young families. Sport-minded folks may opt for the racy R-Line package, with thicker bumpers, gloss black trim and flat-bottom steering wheel.

But beyond the extra cargo space, the Cross Sport also is first in the lineup to introduce VW's new drive-assist features and the next-generation of its Car-Net connectivity, which offers access to directions, entertainment or emergency assistance.

The Cross Sport has a broad stance (80 inches wide) and three-bar chrome grille and new LEDs and fog lamps. On the downside, it has fake cutouts in the lower rear bumper where exhaust pipes should have been. This is an American-built VW _ Chattanooga, Tenn. _ though the engine comes from Mexico and the transmission from Japan, so maybe it's a push.

The Cross Sport comes in three trim levels, three add-on packages and two engines. The tester, the V6 SEL Premium, is powered by a 3.6-liter engine with direct fuel injection. It gets 276 hp, but that's only 41 hp more than the base engine, a 2.0-liter turbo four.

The turbo is quicker off the line, getting to 60 mph in 7 seconds (7.7 seconds for the V-6). But the big guy can tow up to 5,000 pounds if you get the factory trailer hitch, and that's a substantial 3,000 lbs. more than the turbo.

Both engines are mated to an 8-speed transmission which can send power to all four wheels via VW's 4Motion all-wheel-drive system. It is front-wheel biased but can send power to the rear in a millisecond when needed.

With 4Motion there are drive modes, too, which include Normal, Sport, Eco, Off-road, Custom and Snow. These modes tweak engine and transmission settings for improved performance. But sporty it is not, and despite its similar profile to the Jeep Grand Cherokee, it is not in the same league as an off-roader.

Like the seven-passenger Atlas, its ride is pleasant on the open road, smooth, quiet and stable. It does strain in the passing lane, however, and steering is rather numb. Still, for most folks it's a comfortable daily driver as the 4-wheel independent suspension gobbles up railroad bumps and road divots nicely.

The two-ton-plus Cross Sport lags in the segment in fuel economy, managing an EPA-rated 16 mpg city, 22 highway for 19 combined with the 3.6-liter engine plus AWD. Oddly, the four-banger doesn't fare much better unless you go with the FWD version.

Inside, with the third row gone, everyone gets to stretch out in all directions. Volkswagen shoved the rear seat back to create three more inches of legroom back there, and the 80-inch width means more shoulder and hip room. The missing third row opens 40 cubic feet of space behind the second row, though the raked roof lowers vertical space. There are 78 cubes with the 60/40-split rear seats folded down.

Front seats are heated and ventilated and well sculpted, with 10-way power with lumbar for the driver, and 8-way power for whomever called shotgun first. Top trims get an advanced virtual instrument display which includes the new dynamic road sign feature: It reads the current speed limit and alerts if the vehicle speed exceeds by a set number.

Another new driver feature is Traffic Jam Assist, which can accelerate as high as 37 mpg and brake to a full stop without driver input.

Atlas' center stack remains clean and neat, with an 8-inch touchscreen that offers good graphics and feedback. The Car-Net system offers a slew of features through a smartphone app, including car location assistance, monthly vehicle-health reports, and speed alerts when someone else is driving your car.

A premium Fender audio system with subwoofer is available on top trims and a dual sunroof _ front one opens, slides and tilts _ makes for a brighter and breezier cabin.

Beyond the new driver-assist features, every Cross Sport gets forward collision warning with autonomous emergency braking, blind spot monitor and rear traffic warning.

The Cross Sport is the new kid on a block with the likes of Ford Edge, Chevy Blazer, Honda Passport and some others with similar abilities. It's a good formula for those who don't need a third row but want the extra cargo space.

Life & Style

‘World’s loneliest elephant’ Kaavan starts trip to Cambodia

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Kaavan, dubbed the “world’s loneliest elephant” after languishing alone for years in a Pakistani zoo, was readied Sunday for his flight to a sanctuary in Cambodia and the much-needed company of other elephants.

The mammoth task of getting him into an elephant-sized metal box for transport took several hours, and was perhaps the most crucial step in rescuing him from the dire conditions he’s lived in for 35 years.

Had Kaavan been spooked and refused to enter the cage or bolted, his departure could have been delayed for months while the rescue team sought to restore calm and trust before trying again, explained Martin Bauer, a spokesman for Four Paws International. The global animal welfare group has led the charge to save Kaavan since 2016.

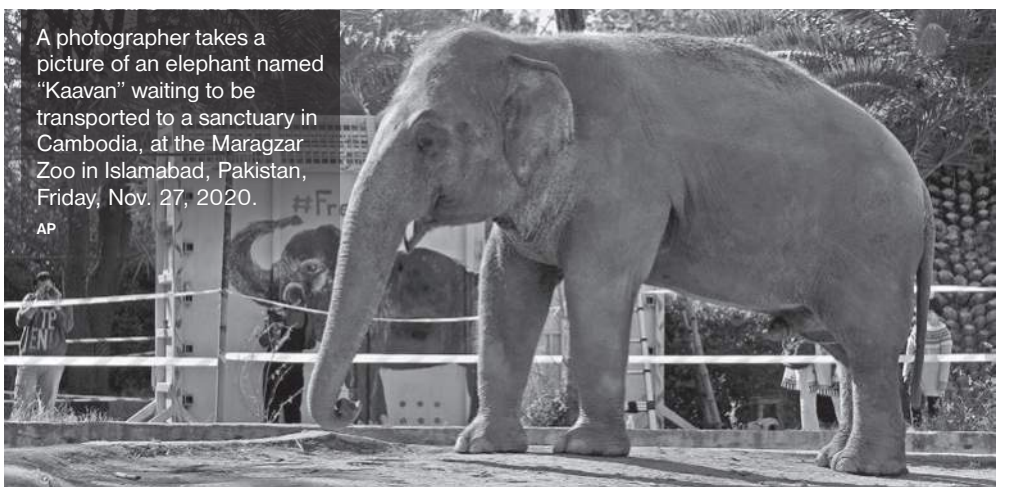
Iconic American singer and actress Cher also arrived in Islamabad last week, the culmination of her longstanding efforts to raise awareness about rescuing Kaavan from the zoo. Conditions there were so bad that a court in the Pakistani capital ordered the zoo closed in August.

Dr. Amir Khalil, a veterinarian with Four Paws who’s been treating Kaavan’s many wounds and ailments over the past three months, said he was hopeful about the next chapter of the elephant’s life.

“In the sanctuary in Cambodia ... waiting for him is three ladies, three Asian female elephants,” he said. “Now Kaavan might have a new partner, and share a new life with a partner.”

Khalil described how on Sunday he slowly and gently cajoled Kaavan to walk backwards into a steel crate, as nearly a dozen men carefully guided him inside using chains around his tree-trunk sized legs.

Kaavan is set to leave aboard a Russian cargo plane for the 25,000-acre sanctuary early Monday morning.



A photographer takes a picture of an elephant named “Kaavan” waiting to be transported to a sanctuary in Cambodia, at the Maragzar Zoo in Islamabad, Pakistan, Friday, Nov. 27, 2020. AP

The plight of the male Asian elephant, who’s been alone since the death of his partner Saheli in 2012, has captured worldwide attention.

Cher’s animal welfare group Free the Wild has worked with Four Paws and the American syndicated columnist and philanthropist, Eric Margolis, to relocate Kaavan—a mission that’s cost about $400,000. She’s also making a documentary film about the process.

George Clooney’s secret to cutting his hair, as seen on TV

LOS ANGELES (AP)—George Clooney is just like us, maybe. The star said he does his own haircuts with a device famously touted in infomercials.

In an interview on “CBS Sunday Morning,” the Oscar-winning actor and filmmaker said he’s been cutting his own hair for more than two decades.

“My hair is really like straw,” Clooney said of his thick, salt-and-pepper thatch. “So it’s easy to cut, can’t really make too many mistakes. So years ago, I bought a thing called a Flowbee.”

“You did not,” said skeptical interviewer Tracy Smith.

“The thing with the vacuum cleaner and clippers, yeah. I still have it,” Clooney replied. “My haircuts take, literally, two minutes.”

Flowbee sales surged when the coronavirus pandemic limited access to salon and barber shops in some areas, Fortune magazine reported in late March. But as Clooney told CBS News correspondent Smith, he’s been cutting his hair “for 25 years” and relies on the Flowbee.

The product’s Texas-based maker didn’t immediately respond Sunday to a request for comment.

The device, first marketed in the late 1980s, has become entrenched in popular culture: It was spoofed in the movie “Wayne’s World” and served as a punchline in TV’s “Glee” and “The Nanny.”

Stan Rosenfield, Clooney’s longtime publicist, said Sunday he didn’t know if Clooney tends his own hair. Although the actor is famed for pranking his co-stars, Rosenfield said it seemed unlikely this was one of his practical jokes.

In this Feb. 11, 2019 file photo, George Clooney participates in the “Catch-22” panel during the Hulu presentation at the Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour at The Langham Huntington in Pasadena, Calif. AP

Testing new release strategy, ‘The Croods’ opens to $14.2M

NEW YORK (AP)—Testing a novel release strategy, Universal Pictures’ animated sequel “The Croods: A New Age” had one of the best opening weekends of the pandemic, grossing $14.2 million over the five-day Thanksgiving holiday weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Whereas new releases have traditionally lasted around 90 days in theaters, Universal has mapped out a shorted theatrical window in deals with major chains AMC and Cinemark that gives the studio the option to move new releases to premium video-on-demand after just 17 days. “The Croods: A New Age” is expected to shift to the home before Christmas for a $20 rental. For an industry reeling from the pandemic, it’s part of wider changes seeping through the industry.

“The Croods: A New Age” grossed $9.7 million Friday-Sunday, which rivals even the weekend start for “Tenet” in September. Warner Bros. didn’t break down the three-day weekend figures for “Tenet,” which began preview screenings in the U.S. on a Monday, but said it grossed $20.2 million in its first week in U.S. theaters plus its first two weeks in Canadian theaters.

Dave Prowse, actor who played Darth Vader, dies at 85

LONDON (AP)—Dave Prowse, the British weightlifter-turned-actor who was the body, though not the voice, of arch-villain Darth Vader in the original “Star Wars” trilogy, has died. He was 85.

Prowse died Saturday after a short illness, his agent Thomas Bowington said Sunday.

Born in Bristol, southwest England, in 1935, Prowse was a three-time British weightlifting champion and represented England in weightlifting at the 1962 Commonwealth Games before breaking into movies with roles that emphasized his commanding size, including Frankenstein’s monster in a pair of Hammer Studios horror films.

Director George Lucas saw Prowse in a small part in “A Clockwork Orange” and asked the 6-foot-6-inch (almost 2-meter) actor to audition for the villainous Vader or the Wookie Chewbacca in “Star Wars.” Prowse later told the BBC he chose Darth Vader because “you always remember the bad guys.”

COVID-19 causes rift between nurse’s boyfriend, his sister

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I am a nurse in New York City. My boyfriend lives in Philadelphia. During the height of the pandemic, we didn’t see each other because I worked on a COVID unit and contracted the virus. His sister became very controlling and kept urging him not to see me, which brought me great pain. I was extremely lonely, and for months, the only people I saw were my co-workers.

At the end of May, my boyfriend and I began seeing each other regularly. Because he sees me, his sister refuses to see him, which makes me very sad. His mother died two years ago.

When his family tries to plan things, his sister either comes late or doesn’t show up. If I’m invited, she says she doesn’t want to be in the same room as me. I spend a lot of time with my boyfriend and his older father, who he now lives with. His father has never expressed that he feels uncomfortable around me.

I feel like we have to plan things around this sister. I want my boyfriend to spend time with his family, but she’s extremely controlling when everyone else in the family seems excited to see me. What do I do?

UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION

DEAR UNCOMFORTABLE: I am assuming that if you are again working that you are tested regularly for COVID and therefore in no danger of giving the virus to anyone. Because there has been so much misinformation spread during the pandemic, many people are being extremely cautious—and rightfully so.

If you had a good relationship with your boyfriend’s sister before the pandemic began, recognize that she acts the way she does because she’s afraid for her life, so stop personalizing it and judging her for it. She has a right to protect herself, even if it seems irrational to you.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: As a grandparent, I feel the Christmas gift my husband and I received last year from our granddaughter was a gift of a lifetime. We have enjoyed it all year. It was a gift of memories, written on 12 cards to be opened on the first day of each month. She had inserted each card into an individual envelope, designated with which month it was to be opened. She put them in a box wrapped with a bow and placed it under the tree.

The excitement generated while anxiously awaiting a new month’s arrival so the new memory could be read created enthusiasm among the entire family. In each envelope were experiences we had forgotten or never realized had made an impact on her life.

A gift like this requires only time and 12 pieces of paper. The concept could even be reversed so it would be from grandparent to grandchild. Few of us grandparents need material gifts, but the caring, thought and love shown by this gift will remain with us all our lives.

WANTED TO SHARE, FRESNO, CALIF.

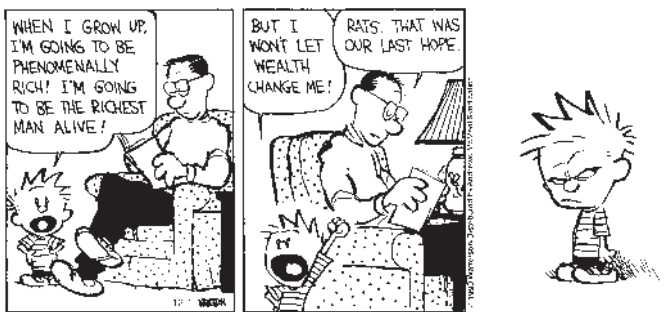
DEAR WANTED TO SHARE: What a precious gift. I have long advocated that the most meaningful gift we can give each other is the gift of self, in the form of time, attention, a handwritten letter or a phone call. Your granddaughter’s concept of a “Memory of the Month Club” was ingenious. I congratulate her for it, and I hope it inspires others.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order “How to Be Popular.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WHEN I GROW UP, I'M GOING TO BE PHENOMENALLY RICH! I'M GOING TO BE THE RICHEST MAN ALIVE!
BUT I WON'T LET WEALTH CHANGE ME!
RATS. THAT WAS OUR LAST HOPE.
YOU'RE GOING TO BE PRETTY LONELY IN THE NURSING HOME.
MAYBE THEN I CAN FINISH THIS BOOK.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

COFFEE-INFUSED CAFFEINATED MASKS!
WHAT?
IT'S BRILLIANT! YOU COULD HAVE DIFFERENT BLENDS! FLAVORED COFFEES!
MAYBE YOUR BREATH ACTIVATES THE CAFFEINE AS YOU INHALE IT?
SAFETY AND TASTY ALL IN ONE!
THIS IS A LOT LIKE YOUR "EDIBLE BAND-AIDS" IDEA.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

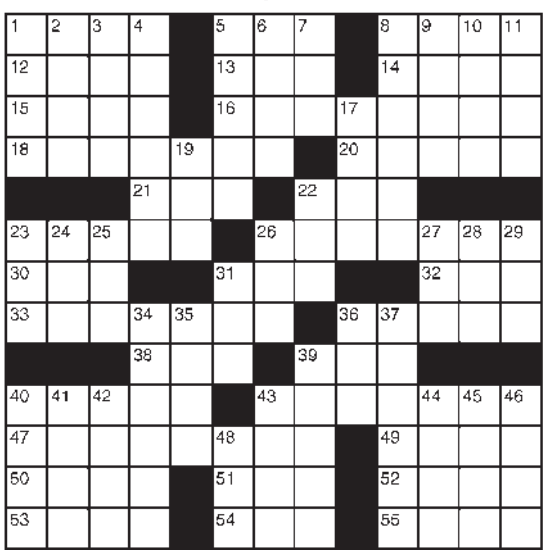
ACROSS
1 LAPD alerts
5 Cyclades isle
8 Applaud
12 Shower bar?
13 SSW opposite
14 Estate recipient
15 Gumbo need
16 Hit song by ABBA
18 Italian sports car
20 "It's nobody — business"
21 "Chandelier" singer
22 Astronaut Jemison
23 Daisy Mae's guy
26 Like good soil
30 Author Tolstoy
31 Press for payment
32 Drunkard
33 Element named for a physicist
36 Sufficient
38 Fireplace residue
39 Pod veggie
40 Blazing
43 Agitation
47 Searched (out)
49 "Of — and Men"
50 "Don't look —!"
51 Arthur of "Maude"
52 Bone-dry
53 Peruse
54 The whole enchilada
55 Minus

DOWN
1 Starting
2 Jab
3 "Firestorm" author Nevada
4 Meager
5 Prefix with "red"
6 "Dedicated to the — Love"
7 Sun. talk
8 Alpine home
9 Camera part
10 Staffer
11 Experts
17 Close
19 Balloon filler
22 Gents
23 TV alien
24 Quilters' get-together
25 Hide-hair insert
26 "Fee, fi, fo, —"
27 WWW access enabler
28 Texter's guffaw
29 Montreal summer
31 "Gee, ya think?"
34 Defaced
35 "Got it"
36 — Lingus
37 Bull or bear
39 Bicycle part
40 Miles away
41 Big party
42 Cookbook author Rombauer
43 Sense
44 Green land
45 Mark Harmon TV series
46 Turner and Danson
48 TV schedule abbr.

Solution time: 22 mins.

A	L	E	C		S	T	D		P	H	A	T
M	E	D	O		A	A	A		R	A	S	H
C	V	C	N		C	L	L	A	C	H	E	
R	I	N	S	E	C		Y	A	N	K	E	E
			U	R	L	S		S	C			
N	U	L	S	E	T	S		E	N	D	S	
A	N	A		E	U	R	O	S		O	O	
T	I	N	A		P	L	L	L	D	O	W	N
		C	F	A		M	D		I			
S	T	E	P	H	E		E	M	C	E	E	S
M	U	L	C	V	E	R		K	L	E	E	
O	B	O	E		A	W	E		E	L	L	E
G	E	T	S		N	E	D		R	A	S	P

Yesterday's answer 12-1



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Vance Joy, 33; Sarah Silverman, 50; Nestor Carbonell, 53; Bette Midler, 75.

Happy Birthday: Look, see and do. Take action, and focus on your pursuits. Handle relationships with enthusiasm, support and the desire to work as a team player. The contributions you make this year will enrich your life and your relationships with the people you love. Uncertainty will lift when someone reveals a secret. It's time to embrace new beginnings and build a brighter future. Your numbers are 9, 17, 22, 27, 31, 35, 42.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Learn from the best, and don't hold back if someone gets in your way. Stand up and push forward. Building character is essential in order to find out what you are capable of doing. Look over your options, and negotiate on your behalf. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Consider where information comes from before you pass it along. Facts matter, and getting to the bottom of a pending situation will depend on what's real. The decisions you make can influence a meaningful relationship. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Set a high standard. Speak up and share your intentions, philosophy and plans. Pay attention to the response you receive, and address sensitive issues with compassion and understanding. Don't let a change someone makes dismantle your goals. Be true to yourself. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take care of personal matters before someone steps in and takes over. Change may not be welcome, but it's best to handle such issues yourself to avoid unnecessary repercussions. Personal improvement is favored and will encourage a romantic gesture. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Lend a helping hand, and someone will offer the same courtesy. Protect against illness or injury. Taking an unnecessary risk will be costly. Put your heart and soul into doing a good job and making a memorable impression. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Sit tight, listen and assess what's going on around you before you decide to make a move. A positive change to how well you get along with a friend or relative will improve your day. Share a special moment with someone you love. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Follow your heart and intuition. Take action, make a statement and do your best to bring people together. Problems will arise if you let someone put unreasonable demands on you. Make your position clear, and do your own thing. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Opportunities will come and go. It's up to you to take advantage of what's going on around you. Start the process, and tie up loose ends before you end up in a position that leaves you at a disadvantage. Put uncertainty to rest. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Spend time fixing up your surroundings and nurturing meaningful relationships. An enthusiastic approach to fact-finding will help eliminate any misconception you have about someone who is elusive or secretive. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Visualize what you want to accomplish, and make alterations that will help you achieve your goal. Look for an opportunity, and seize the moment. Leave nothing to chance, and success will follow. Self-improvement and romance are favored. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Show passion in all you pursue, and progress will follow. Refuse to let others sway you in a direction that benefits them instead of you. It's what you do, not what you say, that will count today. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Call in favors, and ward off an emotional altercation. Getting your responsibilities out of the way will leave time to enjoy the rest of your day. A gift or offering is apparent if you do the right thing. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are ambitious, playful and adventuresome. You are emotional and passionate.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	4				7		9
7		8	6		3		
	1		2			6	5
	3	9	1				
				8	9	7	
8	7			5		9	
		4		9	8		1
6		5				3	

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/01

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	9	4	8	2	1	5	3	7
3	8	1	9	7	5	6	4	2
2	5	7	3	4	6	1	9	8
8	7	6	4	5	3	9	2	1
5	2	3	7	1	9	4	8	6
4	1	9	6	8	2	7	5	3
1	6	8	5	3	4	2	7	9
9	3	5	2	6	7	8	1	4
7	4	2	1	9	8	3	6	5

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

N95 MASKS **Solution: 10 letters**

N	M	E	T	A	L	F	U	M	E	L	B	U	O	D
O	O	E	S	H	I	E	L	D	U	R	A	B	L	E
B	U	I	D	L	R	T	N	N	W	A	S	H	N	S
R	T	H	T	I	R	E	A	T	S	E	T	O	R	I
A	H	E	H	A	C	E	N	E	R	W	R	G	O	G
C	R	A	G	K	L	A	V	N	L	C	I	U	L	N
O	Y	L	I	C	E	I	L	O	I	P	A	N	O	A
M	L	T	L	A	E	S	T	M	C	S	O	S	C	P
F	L	H	E	L	O	E	T	N	R	S	I	T	O	P
O	E	R	Y	F	H	Z	K	R	E	E	I	A	R	O
R	H	T	T	T	A	I	C	E	E	V	U	T	C	O
T	S	P	A	R	T	S	O	Y	E	T	A	S	L	L
P	R	E	V	E	N	T	T	A	O	R	C	L	E	R
Y	R	A	T	I	N	A	S	L	M	E	S	H	V	A
B	U	C	K	L	E	Q	U	I	P	M	E	N	T	E

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Active, Air, Breath, Buckle, Carbon, Clean, Color, Comfort, Cover, Design, Double, Durable, Ear Loop, Equipment, Filter, Fume, Health, Inner, Layer, Light, Medical, Mesh, Metal, Micron, Mouth, Neck, Nose, Pleat, Prevent, Reuse, Safety, Sanitary, Seal, Shell, Shield, Size, Snug, Soft, Stock, Straps, Stretch, Style, Test, Valve, Velcro, Ventilation, Wash, Wear

Yesterday's Answer: Profession

Treasuries 16 and 18 are on sale through the end of the year! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Mahomes, Chiefs hold off Brady's Bucs

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—When Tyreek Hill draws single coverage, Patrick Mahomes is going to find a way to get the ball to the Kansas City Chiefs' most explosive receiver.

Mahomes threw for 462 yards, including touchdowns of 75, 44 and 20 yards to Hill, who finished with 13 catches for 269 yards in the reigning Super Bowl champions' 27-24 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday.

"It feels good, you know, but I feel like there's still a lot of work for me to do," Hill said after going over 1,000 yards for the season.

"I'm always trying to get better, got to be consistent with what you do," Hill added. "Those same people showing you love this week, you make a bad play next week, they're going to hate you."

Mahomes outplayed Tom Brady to win the fourth career matchup between the MVPs, completing 37 of 49 passes and holding the ball for more than 10 minutes without scoring on Kansas City's last two possessions to put the game away.

Hill benefited from Sammy Watkins' return to the Chiefs lineup after being sidelined since Week 5 with a hamstring injury and got the best of a matchup with Bucs cornerback Carlton Davis, who often had no help trying to contain the speedy receiver.

"We don't get that a lot, especially with that guy and his ability," Mahomes said. "So when we do, we try to take advantage of it."

Hill had seven catches for 203 yards and two touchdowns in the first quarter alone, joining Qadry Ismail (210 in the third quarter on Dec. 12, 1999) and Lee Evans (205 in the first quarter on Nov. 19, 2006) as the only NFL receivers since 1980 to have 200 yards worth of receptions in a single quarter.

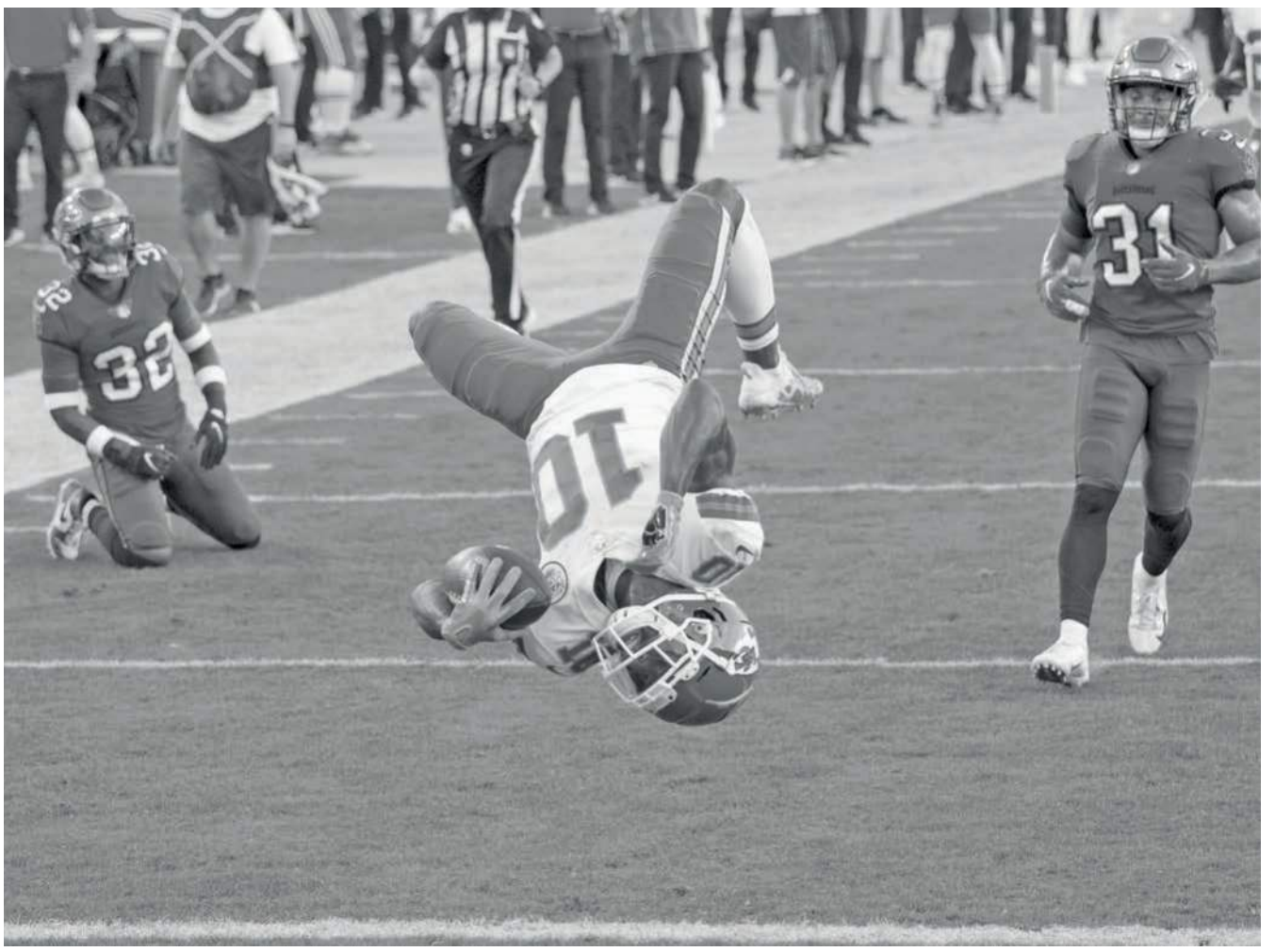
The fifth-year pro's last catch—an 8-yarder on third-and-7 in the final minute — gave Mahomes an opportunity to run out the clock.

"The last one, I learned a long time ago, you don't give Tom Brady another shot," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "That's why he's the G.O.A.T. So, don't give them the ball back. That was the mindset there."

The Chiefs (10-1) won their sixth straight game and clinched their seventh 10-win season in eight years under Reid.

"Very very few guys that I've seen in this league or any league that can backpedal eight, nine, 10, 11 yards in the pocket and throw a dime 25 yards down the field," Bucs coach Bruce Arians said of Mahomes. "And he can read the defense as he does it. That makes him more explosive."

Brady was 27 of 41 for 345 yards, three touchdowns and a pair of second-half interceptions in falling to 2-2 against Mahomes, who built an early 17-0 lead and also had the Chiefs up by 17 entering the fourth quarter.



AP

Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Tyreek Hill (10) does a back flip into the end zone to score a touchdown against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers during an NFL game, Sunday, Nov. 29, 2020, in Tampa, Fla.

Titans 45, Colts 26

Derrick Henry ran for 178 yards and three touchdowns to help visiting Tennessee grab sole possession of first place in the AFC South with a victory against Indianapolis.

A.J. Brown had a 69-yard touchdown reception and also returned an onside kick 42 yards for a score late in the game for the Titans (8-3), who built a 35-14 halftime lead.

Jacoby Brissett had two short TD runs for the Colts (7-4).

Dolphins 20, Jets 3

Ryan Fitzpatrick, returning to the starting lineup due to Tua Tagovailoa's injury, passed for 257 yards and two touchdowns to lead Miami over winless New York.

Dolphins receiver DeVante Parker had eight catches for a season-high 119 yards, but Miami (7-4) won with defense after forcing six punts, notching a fourth-down stop and collecting interceptions by Nik Needham and Xavien Howard.

Packers 41, Bears 25

Aaron Rodgers carved up Chicago's usually formidable defense for four touchdown passes as host Green Bay put a chokehold on the NFC North with a blowout win.

Rodgers completed 21 of 29 passes for 211 yards as Green Bay (8-3) took a three-game lead over Chicago (5-6) and Minnesota with five games left. The Packers could clinch the division title as soon as next week if they win and both teams chasing them lose.

Bears quarterback Mitchell Trubisky, starting his first game since Sept. 27, hit on 26 of 46 passes for 242 yards and three touchdowns.

Bills 27, Chargers 17

Buffalo scored a touchdown on the opening possession of each half and remained alone in first place atop the AFC East by holding off Los Angeles in a victory.

Bills quarterback Josh Allen threw for 157 yards and one touchdown and ran for another score as the Bills improved to 8-3 in the chase for their first division title since 1995.

49ers 23, Rams 20

Robbie Gould kicked a 42-yard field goal as time expired to give San Francisco a victory and a season-series sweep over Los Angeles.

Nick Mullens passed for 252 yards with one interception to lead the 49ers (5-6), who benefited from the return from long absences by Deebo Samuel, who caught 11 passes for 133 yards, Raheem Mostert, who rushed for 43 yards and a score, and Richard Sherman, who intercepted a pass.

Patriots 20, Cardinals 17

Nick Folk made a 50-yard field goal as time expired, lifting New England over Arizona.

The Patriots (5-6), who overcame an early 10-0 deficit, drove for Folk's field goal after Arizona kicker Zane Gonzalez missed a 45-yard attempt with 1:47 remaining. New England quarterback Cam Newton completed 9 of 18 passes for only 84 yards and no touchdowns.

Falcons 43, Raiders 6

Matt Ryan passed for 185 yards and two touchdowns and Deion Jones returned an interception 67 yards for a touchdown as Atlanta took advantage of turnover-prone Las Vegas.

Ryan completed 22-of-39 passes and was intercepted once, but he became the eighth quarterback in NFL history to pass for 3,000 or more yards in 11 consecutive seasons. Ito Smith rushed 65 yards and a touchdown for the Falcons (4-7).

Vikings 28, Panthers 27

Kirk Cousins threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Chad Beebe with 46 seconds left and Minnesota rallied for the victory against Carolina.

The outcome wasn't secured until Carolina kicker Joey Slye missed wide left on a 54-yard field goal attempt with one second remaining. The result dampened a record-setting day for Panthers rookie safety Jeremy Chinn.

Saints 31, Broncos 3

Taysom Hill and Latavius Murray each ran for two touchdowns and New Orleans took advantage of the absence of all Denver quarterbacks.

Hill won his second straight start in the absence of injured Drew Brees as the NFC-leading Saints improved to 9-2 with their eighth consecutive victory.

The Broncos (4-7) played without all four quarterbacks on their roster due to COVID-19 concerns.

Giants 19, Bengals 17

Wayne Gallman scored a touchdown and rushed for a career-high 94 yards, Graham Gano kicked four field goals and visiting New York defeated Cincinnati to move into first place in the NFC East.

The Giants (4-7) won their third straight game but also lost quarterback Daniel Jones to a hamstring injury in the third quarter.

Browns 27, Jaguars 25

Nick Chubb rushed for a season-high 144 yards and a touchdown, and Baker Mayfield threw two touchdown passes as visiting Cleveland posted its third straight win by holding off Jacksonville.

It was the third straight 100-yard rushing game, and fifth of the season, for Chubb.

49ers blindsided by county rules that make team homeless

CALIFORNIA (AP)—San Francisco coach Kyle Shanahan said the team was blindsided by new coronavirus regulations put in place by Santa Clara County officials that will force the 49ers to find a temporary new home for practice and games.

The county announced the new rules Saturday that include a three-week ban on practices and games for contact sports starting Monday. The Niners were on a plane getting ready to travel to Los Angeles where they beat the Rams 23-20 on Sunday when the players and coaches heard about the new rules that will force the team out of its homes.

"We've been working with them as a partner, just trying to figure it out," Shanahan said. "For us to be heading out here yesterday and the relationship we have with them, for all of our players and coaches and everyone on that plane and our wives to find that out while we're getting on a plane and no one to tell us. It was just extremely disappointing."

A county spokeswoman didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Along with banning contact sports, the new rules also require anyone who has traveled more than 150 miles from the county to quarantine for 14 days. The 49ers were set to return from the trip Sunday night just hours before the rules go into effect.

The 49ers will now need to find a new place to practice and to play games. They have two home games scheduled during this three-week stretch: Dec. 7 against Buffalo and Dec. 13 against Washington.

While there are options outside Santa Clara in the Bay Area, including the Raiders' old home at Oakland Coliseum, it appears more likely that the team will play its home games at an existing NFL stadium out of this market. The Arizona Cardinals and Dallas Cowboys have no home games scheduled on the same day as Niners home games the rest of the season.

The Niners have a few days to finalize their decision. With their next game not until a week from Monday, the team won't start practicing until Thursday.

Cost of Tokyo Olympic delay put at $2 billion

AP
In this March 24, 2020 file photo, a man is seen through the Olympic rings in front of the New National Stadium in Tokyo. Tokyo Olympic organizers on Friday, Nov. 27, 2020 announced a series of 18 test events set to begin in March and run into May.

TOKYO (AP)— he cost of the one-year postponement of the Tokyo Olympics is estimated to be just under $2 billion, or about 200 billion yen.

Japan's Kyodo news agency and the Yomiuri newspaper both reported the figure on Sunday citing unnamed sources close to games organizers.

The reported cost of the delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic is in line with repeated estimates over the last several months. The organizers, the Tokyo metro government and the Japanese national government are expected to report next month how the costs will be shared.

The International Olympic Committee has said it would chip in about $650 million to cover some of the costs of the delay, but has offered few public details.

Tokyo is becoming very expensive.

The official cost of putting on the Tokyo Olympics is $12.6 billion. However, a government audit last year said it was probably twice that much. All but $5.6 billion is public money.

Tokyo said the games would cost $7.3 billion when it won the bid in 2013.

The $2 billion only adds to the total. A University of Oxford study published early this year — calculated before the postponement—said Tokyo was the most expensive Summer Olympics on record and the meter is still running.

The IOC and organizers have been campaigning over the last several months to convince sponsors and a skeptical Japanese public that the Olympics can be held safely in the middle of a pandemic.

The Olympics are to open on July 23, 2021, followed by the Paralympics on Aug. 24. They involve 15,400 athletes and ten of thousands of officials, judges, staff, VIPs, sponsors as well as media and broadcasters.

IOC President Thomas Bach, who was in Tokyo earlier this month, has said a vaccine and improved rapid testing would help pull off the Olympics. But he cautioned they are not "silver bullets."

Athletes are expected to be closely monitored, held in quarantine-like conditions, discouraged from sightseeing and encouraged to leave as soon as they finish competing.

Some fans are expected at the events, but it is unclear if many fans from abroad will be allowed to attend.

Japan has controlled COVID-19 better than most countries, but has seen a spike over the last several weeks in Tokyo and elsewhere. Tokyo set a one-day record for new infections on Friday with 570. About 2,000 deaths in Japan have been attributed to COVID-19.

Test events

Local organizers on Friday announced a series of 18 test events set to begin in March and run into May.

The announcement in an online news conference came the same day that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government reported a one-day record of 570 new coronavirus infections in the capital.

Although Japan has handled the pandemic better than most countries, cases have been surging recently with about 2,000 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in a country of 125 million.

Officials said at least four of the test events will involve athletes from abroad, including tests in swimming, gymnastics, diving and volleyball.

A track and field meet on May 9 at the new National Stadium is listed as test event. It is not clear if athletes from abroad will participate.

Hidemasa Nakamura, the games delivery officer, said none of the test events will allow fans from abroad, although some events will permit an unspecified number of fans from Japan.

"No, we will not have spectators from abroad," Nakamura said.

Several of the events will not even involve athletes, testing "operations" only as a way to cut back on spending.

Japan has held sports events recently with fans. The final game of the Japan Series of professional baseball this week drew about 19,000 fans in a 38,000-seat stadium in Fukuoka. And a few thousand fans were allowed to attend an international gymnastics event earlier this month in Tokyo.

"As for the number of spectators, we have to take the guidelines of the Japanese government into consideration," said Yasuo Mori, who works with Nakamura on games delivery.

The announcement by the Tokyo organizing committee is the latest in a campaign over the last several months to convince a global audience, sponsors and the Japanese public that the Olympics and Paralympics will take place despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organizers are to announce a "toolbox" of preliminary countermeasures next month against COVID-19, although they are likely to be vague and subject to many changes going into next year.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, who was in Tokyo this month to talk up the games, acknowledged much of the planning hinges around the availability of vaccines and rapid testing.

He said they were not a "silver bullet" but certainly would be a help along with social distancing, masks and near-quarantine conditions in the Athletes Village.

Tyson-Jones bout reminds us what boxing could be

LOS ANGELES—Back in the day—and isn't that the language we use when we're talking about a 54-year-old former heavyweight champion facing a 51-year-old former heavyweight champion? —there was nothing in sports or entertainment quite like a Mike Tyson fight.

There's been nothing to match it in the last 30 years. The MGM Grand Garden was filled to capacity with celebrities and sports stars of all types whose jewelry collectively had to be worth more than the GDP of a number of medium-sized countries.

On Saturday, rapper Snoop Dogg described Tyson's fight with Roy Jones Jr. that was at an empty Staples Center in Los Angeles by saying, "This s--- like two of my uncles fighting at the barbecue."

While Snoop's commentary was one of the many things that made this unusual night surprisingly enjoyable, he was wrong there. This was a lot better than that. The versions of Tyson and Jones that fans grew to love no longer exist, but give them credit for this: They worked hard to get themselves into shape and put on a credible show that was somehow ruled a draw by the trio of former WBC champions who scored it.

They didn't look out of place. I have seen worse—much, much worse—fights from professionals at the peak of their games.

The internet was filled with talk about the fight, and it hammered home a point: Boxing is a sport dependent upon stars, and badly missing them. That's for many reasons, but promoters trying to wring every single cent out of them is the biggest.

Modern boxing promoters have a great aversion to taking risk and having their talents potentially lose. They don't make the fights that they should make, even when bouts like Teofimo Lopez-Vasiliy Lomachenko and Terence Crawford-Kell Brook prove without question that they would be rewarded if they do so.

Tyson lacked the power he once had and Jones lacked the speed that made him so great, but they both have something that not a single pro boxer active today has: A name recognized around the world.

Exhibition packs a punch

A long time ago, pro wrestling announcer used to open his Saturday show by intoning "Professional wrestling is the sport where anything can happen, usually does and probably will." And by the 1990s, that same thing could be said for a Tyson fight.

People tuned in because he was an incredible talent, but also because he could say and do just about anything.

And that's why social media was abuzz on Saturday and why a lot of people bought the pay-per-view despite the ages of the fighters. The fight was horribly promoted but the show on fight night did well.

It was a mix of hip hop music and boxing, a formula that has been tried repeatedly to varying degrees of success (usually none). But Triller pulled this one off. The musical acts appeared between fights and didn't seem out of place.

Speaking of injured, fans bought the pay-per-view wondering if Tyson would follow the California athletic commission's rule set, or if he'd blow them off and try to take Jones' head off.

Tyson clearly followed the rules but was the deserved winner of the bout. He was in better shape and landed the cleaner punches. If you closed your eyes briefly, you could envision the old Tyson at work as he bobbed and weaved and pivoted to throw his famous hook.

Jones was known as "Captain Hook" during his career because of his good left hook, though he didn't get to use it much on Saturday. His best shot was a straight left hand out of a southpaw stance late in the sixth.

Jones is one of the most iconic boxers in modern history, but against Tyson, he was facing one of the most iconic athletes in history.

And so this show was about him. It had plenty of nice touches.

Boxing promoters—those people who promote guys in their 20s and 30s who do this for a living —should take note.

Making the right fights is only part of it. They then have to be promoted the right way, as well.

This trip back to the mid-1990s should serve as a reminder that boxing at its best is a compelling sport that can attract big numbers.

There's a lot to be learned from this effort by Tyson, Jones and Triller.

Hopefully, it's heeded. ***(NBC)***

Hornets acquire Hayward, 2 draft picks from Celtics

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—The Charlotte Hornets have acquired forward Gordon Hayward and unprotected 2023 and 2024 second-round draft picks from the Boston Celtics in exchange for a heavily protected 2022 second-round draft pick as part of a sign-and-trade transaction.

The Celtics will only get Charlotte's draft pick if the Hornets finish in the top five in the league next season, so it's unlikely they will get anything in the deal other than unloading Hayward's contract.

Hayward previously agreed to a four-year, $120 million deal to join the Hornets.

"We are thrilled to welcome Gordon and his family to the Hornets organization and Charlotte," Hornets general manager Mitch Kupchak said. "Gordon is an NBA All-Star, a proven scorer and playmaker and a tough competitor that will fit well into the needs of our team. We believe that his basketball talent, NBA experience and veteran leadership will make a positive impact on our young, talented team as it continues to develop."

AP
In this Aug. 17, 2020 file photo, Boston Celtics' Gordon Hayward, center, looks to pass as Philadelphia 76ers' Matisse Thybulle (22) and Tobias Harris (12) defend during the first half of an NBA first round playoff game in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

The Hornets also waived guard Nicolas Batum and forward Ray Spalding.

Hayward, a 10-year NBA veteran, has appeared in 641 regular-season games with 479 starts with the Jazz and Celtics, averaging 15.3 points, 4.4 rebounds and 3.5 assists in 30.8 minutes per game. The 6-foot-7 forward has appeared in 29 postseason games with 16 starts, averaging 15 points, 4.6 rebounds and 2.9 assists in 33 minutes per game.

Batum signing with Clippers

Nicolas Batum's stint with the Charlotte Hornets came to an end Sunday, when the team waived the veteran forward ahead of the 2020-21 season. Charlotte is expected to use the stretch provision on Batum, which will allow it to spread the final year of his contract over multiple years. The downside is the Hornets now have his money on the books for an extended period, but the upside is they'll have enough cap space to complete the signing of Gordon Hayward on a four-year, $120 million deal.

As for Batum, it didn't take him long to find a new team. He'll be signing with the Los Angeles Clippers once he clears waivers, according to The Athletic's Shams Charania. Though still only 31 years old, Batum has struggled in recent years, both with injuries and a decline in form. Last season he managed to appear in just 22 games, in part due to a broken finger, and averaged a career-low 3.6 points per game on 34.6 percent shooting.

In his prime, Batum would have been a perfect fit for this Clippers team due to his size on the wing and versatility on both sides of the ball. These days, it's hard to see him playing a big role for this team. Admittedly the Clippers are a bit thin on the wing, so as a low-risk, high-reward move, it's worth a shot to bring Batum in for some extra depth. He's still smart and skilled enough that if he's healthy he could give them some minutes over the course of the season, but there shouldn't be any major expectations here.

TRYOUTS

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still being finalized. The tryouts for returning and new players are set from 4pm to 6pm on Dec. 2, 4, 7, 11, 16, 18, 21, 23, 28, and 30.

Players interested in joining the tryouts must be born between 2002 and 2005 for the girls U19 national team and between 2005 and 2008 for the girls U16 national squad. They must also hold a valid U.S. passport and complete the NMIFA COVID-19 waiver. NMIFA will strictly implement COVID-19 safety protocols before, during, and after the tryouts or as long as players are at the premise of the NMISTC.

Players that will earn spots on the national team will have a chance to represent the CNMI to two Asian Football Confederation-sanctioned competitions. According to Ito, initially the Commonwealth is supposed to send its national squad to the AFC U20 and U17 Championship Qualifiers slated for March and April next year, respectively. NMIFA is still waiting for AFC announcements on the new dates for various competitions in the zone, as the confederation's calendar of events were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last off-island tournament that Commonwealth female players participated in was the East Asian Football Federation U15 Girls Festival in August 2019 in South Korea. The CNMI bets played against Guam, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Chinese-Taipei, and China.

NMIFA, despite the absence of regular competitions on and off-island this year due to the pandemic, is hoping to draw more female players to the national team program to boost its stock and prepare for the resumption of international tournaments.

"This training and tryout sessions will further help develop our women's, youth, and national team programs," Ito said.

EAST ASIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION
In this file photo, the CNMI's Christina Atalig pushes the ball away from Hong Kong defenders during their game in the 2019 East Asian Football Federation U15 Girls Festival at the Mokpo International Football Training Center in South Korea.

FERIA

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show (Mississippi Battle in Gulf Coast) at 143 lbs. In August 2019 I did MaxFit Classic in Florida and got my nationals qualification there," Feria said.

He added that he got back into bodybuilding through one of his friends who was prepping for asked me to be his workout partner. It was 16 weeks out, so Feria decided to just jump on prep and do the show as well.

"From there on I fell in love with the sport again. Now, plans for 2021 is go back to the NPC Nationals and attempt my IFBB pro card again. There's a couple other national shows I could do, but my eyes are set for November 2021," the former Chalan Kanoa resident said.

NPC NATIONALS
Dicky Feria, third left, poses with fellow competitors in the men's bodybuilding open bantamweight division.

NPC NATIONALS
Dicky Feria flexes his muscle during the 2020 National Physique Committee National Championships held on Nov. 19-21 in Florida.

Mahomes, Chiefs hold off Brady's Bucs

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Feria takes shot at pro ranks

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Marianas High School graduate Dicky Feria moved a step closer to gaining pro rankings after qualifying for the 2020 National Physique Committee National Championships.

The 21-year-old competed in the men's bodybuilding open bantamweight division of the NPC Nationals and placed eighth, beating five other competitions in his group. NPC is the largest amateur bodybuilding organization in the United States and the only amateur group recognized by the International Federation of Bodybuilding and Fitness Pro League. The Nationals is an IFBB Pro Qualifier and the Top 2 finishers in each division contest are given pro status. Jarlew Barlow and Patrick Johns got the pro cards in Feria's division.

Despite falling short in his first attempt to turn pro, Feria was pleased with the opportunity to compete in the Nationals, especially at these challenging times.

"I prepared for Nationals since November 2019. I was supposed to do a few warm-up shows but the COVID-19 pandemic happen. So, I decided to just stay on prep year-round and focus on Nationals," said Feria.

Before competing in the NPC Nationals which was held last Nov. 21 in Orlando, Florida, Feria joined a national qualifier and topped his division to advance to the big stage.

Back home, he was part of the big group of bodybuilders that participated in the inaugural Marianas Muscle Bodybuilding Competition at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in 2015. He finished third in the junior bodybuilding event behind Regino Celis and George Pangelinan.

"Then I took four years off and let myself go. Gained all the weight back. When I left the island, I decided I wanted to lose the weight again. In June 2018 I was 245 lbs. By June 2019, I did my first NPC

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NPC NATIONALS
Dicky Feria, right photo, poses for the judges during the 2020 National Physique Committee National Championships held last Nov. 21 in Florida. Left photo shows Feria when he competed in the 2015 Marianas Muscle Bodybuilding Competition at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center.

Tryouts for women's national teams start tomorrow

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association will kick off a series of tryouts for two women's national teams tomorrow at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The open tryouts are for the CNMI's girls U16 and U19 national teams, according to NMIFA coaching staff member Angie Ito. There will be 10 sessions for the December tryouts, while the next schedule is

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A Matansa Football Club player kicks the ball in front of Southern United Football Club defenders during last year's NMIFA Spring Youth League at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.